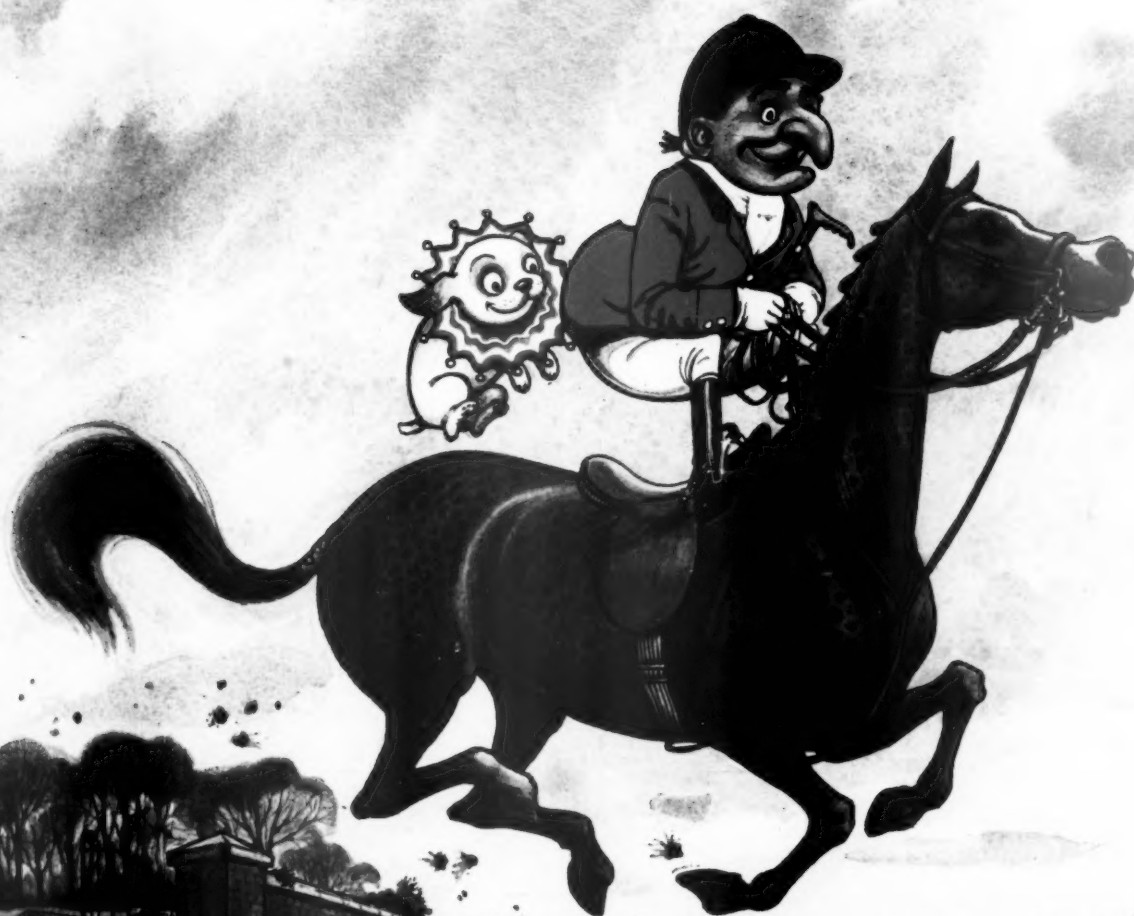


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PUNCH

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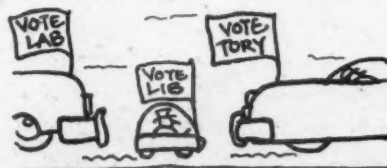
LAST week's disclosure that Britain has "fewer than five hydrogen bombs" is expected to touch off some more of those protest marches.

SEVERAL firms of stockbrokers are now installing closed-circuit television sets so that up-to-the-minute share prices can be screened. If they don't want tube trouble they'd better remember to turn the brightness down whenever the latest TV shares flash on.

EARL ATTLEE's plea in the *Fabian Journal* for more leisure for M.P.s might have attracted more support if it hadn't been timed to appear just as M.P.s were ending a twelve weeks' holiday.

It doesn't seem certain whether the Consumers' Association claim that slimming cures are "without slimming value" was proved or disproved by the number of slimming cure manufacturers who lost pounds through this one.

THE QUESTION being asked in the traffic-jams at the moment is why it should be

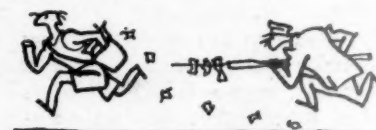


thought that a car-ride to the polling-booth is going to get the Conservatives any extra votes.

B.E.A.'s claim to the world's cheapest air fares, at a mere 2½d. a mile, is a neat

bit of publicity. Only the more captious jet-age passenger feels a touch of disgruntlement as he sits in the sky calculating that he's spending about £150 an hour.

A PROPOSAL to employ special patrols to watch for people dropping litter in the street was turned down by Barnet



Council after Councillor Cheason had said "It would be throwing ratepayers' money down the drain." Still, as long as it goes down.

"BLACK MASS MEN STRIKE AGAIN"
Daily Herald

Devil to pay?

G.P.O. DRIVERS, though pleased with the new design of van said to be "square-fronted like the modern bus," would really prefer something less likely to encourage people to hop on.

SHOPGIRLS are better-dressed, says a fashion piece, and the "drab creature in black is disappearing." She always was.

Canadian Capers

As resident cartoonist on the *Standard*, Vicky

Will find the going anything but tricky. He can go as far Left as he feels inclined

Because of Lord Beaverbrook's breadth of mind,

And he'll learn that there's only one serious sin—

Not putting pictures of his Lordship in.



Punch Diary

SURELY the saddest figure in the U.S. Congressional elections is that of Mr. Nelson Rockefeller, the newly-elected Governor of New York. Every commentator agrees that he has had the Republican nomination for the Presidency handed to him on a plate; apart from being politically successful, he is young, rich, good-looking, and has the kind of name that in America corresponds with, say, Cecil in England. Indeed, there is only one obstacle in his way to the Presidency, and it really is bad luck that it should be so insurmountable. Mr. Rockefeller is a Republican; and the next President of the United States will be a Democrat.

No Customers, Please

THE Government's relaxation of the credit squeeze has had some curious results. One car sales firm, for instance, hastened to drop the deposit required to a mere five per cent of the selling price and spread the balance over fifty months at five per cent interest. Within days, "owing to the unexpected and unprecedented response," the minimum deposit had to be raised to ten per cent, and sterner measures still are in the offing. "If the flood of inquiries persists," warns the firm's managing director, "we may have to raise the rate again." That is the customer all over. Offer him something tempting and he comes trampling into the shop in his hundreds, without a thought for the inconvenience he is causing, until in self-defence the shopman has to put up the shutters, or anyway the prices. Look what happened to that wretched man who made a better mouse-trap than his neighbour. Though he tried

to hide in the woods, the customers made a beaten path to his door.

Cannot the banks come to the rescue of the H.P. people again, with an even handsomer offer of accommodation than they made last time—no limit, everybody served, and all loans interest-free for the first five years? Alas, it would do no good. The customer would spoil it all by his intemperance. "If this kind of thing goes on," the Managing Director of the Midland would soon be saying . . .

Stone Walls Do Not . . .

I EXPECT the Home Secretary's advisers have told him about Mr. Williamson and Mr. Shaw. They escaped from a prison without bars, and on being recaptured and recharged told the magistrates that they much preferred the old-fashioned establishments with locked gates and high walls, where a man can "resign himself to doing his sentence." Apparently they had been trying to get transferred to one of these for some time, but were gruffly turned down. Is prison reform on the right lines? Serious thought must be given to this. The Court must consider, in sending offenders to open prisons, whether the frustrations of the life there are not, in effect, an added penalty. For habitual escapers in particular there can be little fun in just walking out and taking the first bus home. On the other hand, Mr. Williamson and Mr. Shaw

may have been luckier than they knew. I was in Pentonville the other evening, voluntarily, and found a number of privileged men being encouraged to watch television.

Musical Box

IS it fair that members of the Royal Family, already well-burdened with duties, should also have to join in singing "I Used to Sigh for the Silvery Moon" on Royal Variety night? This branch of audience participation is a painful enough infliction for the rest of us, what with feeling a prig if we don't sing and a fool if we do, wondering what it all sounds like to the man in front, having practically no idea of the words and not much of the tune and not being singers anyway. But for Royalty the ordeal is intensified. It is not merely a question of singing, but seeming to enjoy it—with the rest of the audience so busy following the Royal lip-movements that they may forget to sing at all and leave the whole thing to Mr. G. H. Elliott and the close harmony team from Buckingham Palace.

Some Village Dawson

AN interesting new manifestation of the do-it-yourself fashion has broken out in the Strand, where a garish, if rather cluttered, window-display invites customers to come in and convert themselves into limited companies. "Our companies," they are assured, "can trade in any part of the world." I wonder what sort of response they will get. Will the clerks and the typists and the messenger-boys queue up to get themselves made into companies like Diana Dors and Noël Coward? Will the students from neighbouring King's College flock to turn themselves into John Doe, B.A., & Co., Ltd., so that they can trade freely in France and Spain and Germany as they hitch-hike around on their summer holidays? And if it is not people like these that the shop is after, who on earth is it, I wonder?

SPORTING PRINTS

Next week the third of Hewison's drawings of sporting personalities will portray

BILLY WRIGHT



"Personally I wouldn't mind if it were all subliminal."



... and it shall prevail

THE NEW BOOK OF SNOBS



In 1846-7 Thackeray wrote "The Snobs of England" in *PUNCH*, later reprinted as "The Book of Snobs." In this series snobbery is brought up to date, but the title decorations are from Thackeray's own drawings.

LORD KINROSS on Holidays



SNOBBERY, like certain other religions, is a form of self-torture. To be smart, as to be good, it is necessary to suffer, to deny yourself the things you enjoy for the things you don't but ought to. Looking back on the sufferings of my youth I remember holidays as periods when I went to places I disliked and did things I disliked to impress people I disliked. I am thankful to say I can no longer afford them. Reclining comfortably at home during the best months of the year, I now recall those periods with a sense of profound satisfaction that, as in the case of my schooldays, I shall not have to go through them again.

When I was young, as indeed to-day, there were two things I especially disliked. One was shooting, because I could not shoot, and the other was gambling, because I hated losing money more than I enjoyed winning it. But on holiday, in quest of the snob's holy grail, I would spend long weeks on grouse moors and long nights in continental casinos. For the grouse moors I had a kilt made, to which I was not entitled, and which fitted me badly as I had not the right figure for it. I remember my deep mortification when my father, a man, alas! blind to the refinements of snobbery, took one look at me in this costume and dubbed me a "Piccadilly Highlander."

Scotland was smart in those days, the great snob-expresses steaming out of King's Cross and Euston around the Tenth of August, their sleeping-car windows dropping, on typewritten sheets, the names of the nobility, whose

gun cases and fishing-rods and golf-clubs, dropping the same names on printed labels, lay piled on the platforms in charge of aristocratic-looking valets and dogs. Often I would see these trains off, pretending I was travelling on them, and then return home to bed. When I did travel it was ashamedly third-class and unseen, by day.

In snob terms it was not the moors themselves that counted; for no one could see you there. To be seen you had to make long and arduous pilgrimages across lochs and burns and bogs and mountains, to Highland Gatherings. Here you would stand all day long in the rain in a field, as you listened to bagpipes squealing and watched strong men in kilts trying to throw telegraph poles across the ring, while, if you happened to be talking to some Scots lady of title, you cocked an eye over the shoulder to catch the attention of the society photographer.

In those days he was everywhere. To-day the name of Balmain is that of a snob Parisian *couturier*; then, pronounced in downright Scottish fashion, it was that of the photographer at a snob golfing resort, North Berwick. Here you would have to put on plus fours and a Fair Isle sweater, such as the Prince of Wales wore, and then, maybe, before catching Mr. Balmain's eye, to undergo the penance of playing as much as two-thirds of a round of this unlikeable game.

But to-day, as indeed to a great extent then, holidays, to have any sort of snob significance, must be spent abroad. Then it was the Engadine in winter and the South of France in summer. I remember long days of agony and nights of fatigue at St. Moritz, a high snowy place where it was necessary to go up mountains in miniature trains and fall down them with skis on, afterwards drinking far



into the night to prove the dubious point that there could, at such an altitude, be no such affliction as a hangover.

The South of France was generally known as the Septic Belt. It had a right end and a wrong end, situated respectively to the east and to the west of Cannes. Secretly I preferred the wrong—and less septic—end, where there were pretty little harbours and cheap clean hotels and unfrequented bathing beaches. But I had to deny myself the indulgence of such deviations. I had to get into the Blue Train—a train so grand that you could cash cheques on it—and go to sleep until I was out of temptation's way, on the beaten track beyond the Estérel, the harbour of Cannes, stacked with the yachts of the rich, gleaming expensively beneath me, and a galaxy of costly hotels and palatial casinos and crowded beaches, resorts of Anybody who was Anybody, stretching before me as far as the Italian frontier.

Here, night after night, I would do my penance in the casinos, pretending to gamble and feasting my eyes, through the smoke-filled, superheated air, on all the Somebodies who were doing so. Satisfied to identify names that would be dropped next day in the *Continental Daily Mail* or the *Eclaireur de Nice*, I would watch them labouring away with their counters far into the night, their furrowed expressions reflecting that anxiety and intentness of concentration which holiday pleasures involve.

But the first world war had given birth to new snobberies, with which it became more and more necessary for the devotee to keep pace. One of these was a snobbery of colour. Previously, on the Riviera, the Russian Grand Dukes and the retired English noblemen and the expatriate millionaires from beyond the ocean would sit circumspectly under the palms in the gardens of their extravagant villas, wearing shantung suits and trailing frocks, and protecting themselves with parasols and panamas and large flowered hats against the filtering rays of the winter sunlight. At the first threat of summer they would be off back to the cool of the north; the villas, the hotels, the casinos, the shops would close; and the Riviera would bask alone through the long hot months, with none but its fishermen remaining to brave the sun.

But now, all of a sudden, the sun

became smart, imposing on holiday-makers the ritual of a new form of sacrifice. Devotees of the snob cult, henceforward, must be roasted whole, and moreover alive, grilling themselves to a turn, from rare to medium and finally *au point*, in one of a new smart range of colours, from black to tan. This was partly, perhaps, out of a brotherly respect, in this age of expanding international democracy, for the negro race, which, with Paul Robeson crooning away at his spirituals and the Bright Young People swooning away to negro bands, had become fashionable in the West End of London. They made it smart to be black.

But largely, I dare say, this was due to a new form of snobbery—about health. Among the Edwardians it was smart to be ill. They were snobs of the stomach, eating to fashionable excess for three parts of the year, and indulging in luxurious cures, in such places as

Vichy or Carlsbad, during the other part. But to-day it is smart to be well. Life, with its vitamins and health foods and planned diets, is one long cure for the stomach, and on holidays the flesh must be mortified still further, its pigmentation modified, its surface flayed and scorched and branded with the stigmata of an exacting foreign Sun-god.

To-day, crowding the fishermen off the beaches along all the Rivas and the Lidos from the Costa Brava to the Sorrento Peninsula, the holidaymakers lie prone, cooking themselves in this way, the soft blush of the English rose giving place to the leathery tan of the loquat. In Victorian times those unable to afford holidays pulled down their blinds, lest the neighbours discover the shameful secret that they were staying at home. Now all they have to do is to visit the neighbouring sun-ray clinic.

As on the votaries of most Orders, further rigours are imposed on the



holiday maker in terms of costume. No longer may he or she travel in the easy comfort of blazer and flannels or of a light cotton print. Snobbery requires a uniform, and this to-day, carrying the principle of brotherhood one stage further, must be attuned to the proletarian level—that, in fact, of the ousted fisherman. Regardless of sex, the fashionable beachcomber must to-day endure the rough discomfort of sailcloth slacks, mechanics' jeans, sailors' T-shirts, boatmen's rope-soled shoes, but more expensively made and less modestly coloured than theirs. To show where they have been for their holidays they must moreover continue to wear

these garments as they brave the chill of the English autumn and spring, working in the garden at week-ends back home.

For snobbery has gone into reverse. It is now smart to be unsmart. There survive still cloistered sects of Somebodies, cursed with riches, hence confined to straight and narrow paths, dedicated to pilgrimages in the restrictive discomfort of yachts and condemned to endure, within the rigid sanctuary of the luxury hotel, the exclusive company of others as rich as themselves. Those who count, however, stray, carefully casual, down the social ladders and off the beaten tracks of past generations.

The wrong ends have become the right ends, the Left Bank the right bank. Holidays become annually more complex through the necessity to be simple. It is now part of the snobbery of travel to seek out that pretty little harbour and that cheap clean hotel and that unfrequented bathing beach—and to frequent

them; to score points over others with your own pet *trattoria* just behind the *piazza* where you get wonderful *scampi*; your own pet *posada*, with so much of the real atmosphere, right up in the *sierra* behind the Costa Brava; your own pet island, without a tourist on it, just off Ischia.

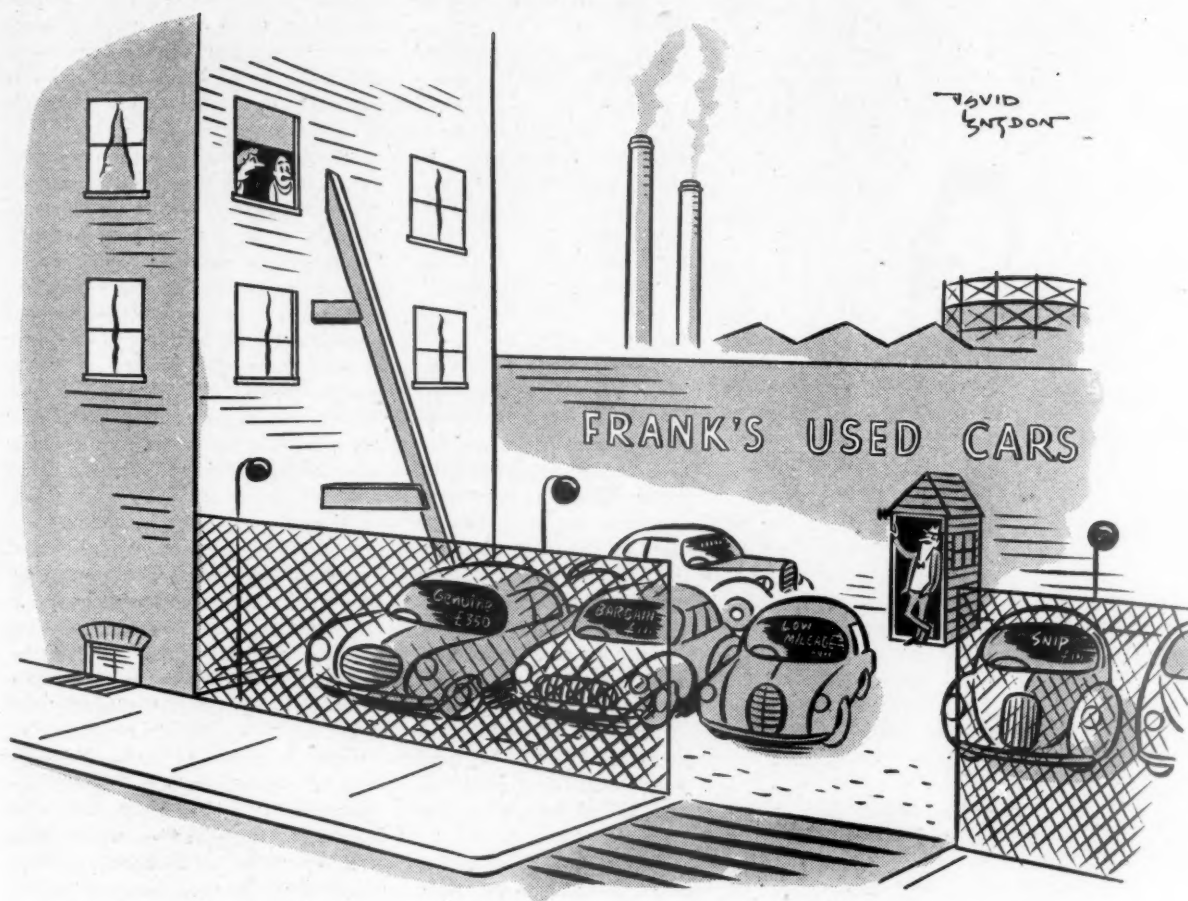
Nor is the sun any longer enough. For Culture has reared its head. Even Scotland, which once offered sports to the unsporting, now offers music to the unmusical. Abroad, beyond Calais, Art runs rife, and before taking a summer holiday it is necessary to devote the long winter evenings to long weary hours of prep. *Baedeker* and *Michelin* and the *Guide Bleu* are no longer enough if you are to hold your own throughout next winter not merely with your amateur film of "My Trip" but with knowing references, dropped in passing, to Romanesque, Cinquecento, Rococo, Palladian, Hispano-Mauresque, Hellenistic, Crusader or Lombard. The Riviera is no longer enough without its Roman remains, the Lido without the Brenta, Capri without Paestum, Spain without Goya, Germany without Wagner. Soon Rome will not be enough without Athens, Athens without Byzantium, Byzantium without Babylon.

Holidays to-day are hard work. For the world is their oyster. But only, in this case, during the months without an R in them. At other times there will be no one to see you, and not being seen is not being believed. In July and in August and a bit of September the whole continent of Europe becomes one great concentrated holiday encampment, bristling with sunshine and art, where Everybody who is Everybody is in the right place at the right time, doing the right things—and Somebody who is Nobody, no more than an inverted snob, is staying alone at home, as I do.



Other writers in this series will be:

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SPIKE HUGHES
SIRIOL HUGH-JONES
HENRY LONGHURST
THE REV. SIMON PHIPPS
STEPHEN POTTER
J. B. PRIESTLEY
PAUL REILLY
GEORGE SCHWARTZ
ANNE SCOTT-JAMES
GWYN THOMAS
FRANCIS WILLIAMS



"See which one he takes away with him for the week-end, and make him an offer for it Monday."

Duet for Four Voices

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

I DON'T want to make any cracks about the Church always being behind the times. But obviously that London vicar who recently advised brides and grooms to get the ceremony on tape, to play back later as a balm for moments of domestic discord, thought he was on to some new thing: whereas my friends Mabel and Rodney Tuffnell did it as long ago as 1954.

It wasn't until Christmas of that year that Rodney remembered the tape under pressure of events. The whole affair was very silly and trivial, really, and worse still concerned Mabel's mother. As Rodney said afterwards, it was all on music-hall comedian level and correspondingly more painful. After

twenty years of matrimony we accept that all jokes about married life are true: during the earlier, starry-eyed stages every drama of undercooked cabbage, favourite caps given to jumble-sales, or late-at-the-office husbands falling down in the dark trying to take their trousers off has its keen, individual sting.

The question of whether Mabel's mother, a Mrs. Pring, should stay with the Tuffnells over Christmas was, of course, cropping up for the first time. Rodney had never cared for Mrs. Pring in the way that he cared for Mabel. She was a great eater, and much addicted to embarrassing personal remarks. Sometimes the two characteristics coincided, as they had at the

time of Rodney's first kiss. It was on the occasion of his engagement, but it was Mrs. Pring he was kissing (Mabel he had kissed before then). She was finishing a three-layer wafer biscuit at the time, and rubbed her cheek afterwards with a humorous wince, saying "My word, you must get my little girl to give you a proper razor." It was typical. She was not capable of the more direct insult of actually giving one herself.

The incident came afresh into Rodney's mind on that early December evening. He was putting coal on the sitting-room fire, as instructed, when Mabel spoke to him from the kitchen. He didn't hear the first time, yelled



Eric Sargin

"What?" and crashed half a hod of coal on at the very moment of the repeat. The more experienced would have recognized that the stage was well set. For mutual exasperation there is practically nothing to beat the inaudible shout from the next room. It curses her that gives and him that takes. Mabel came running in, twisting an oven-cloth angrily.

"You've never liked her, I realize that," she said.

"Liked who?"

"Mother."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"You don't listen."

"I listened, but I can't hear. What's the good of talking to me when I'm putting coal on the fire?"

"Throwing it on."

"As you please."

"I hate you when you're sarcastic."

"Sorry, darling."

"Mabel, thank you very much. You

called Mrs. Bixley darling at the dramatic society dance."

"It was the theatrical atmosphere. Noël Coward gives me—"

"And don't try and turn everything into a joke. Is she to come or not?"

"Who?"

"Mother."

"What for?"

"Christmas, Christmas!"

"Oh. Shall we have enough food?"

To do Rodney justice, Mrs. Pring's appetite was not uppermost in his mind. He was merely playing for time. But for Mabel, to whom in their more attuned moments he had confided his feelings about her mother's food-complex, in exchange for Mabel's light aspersions on Mr. Tuffnell, senior's, boring anecdotes, it was the red rag. She screamed, beat him on the chest with the two-fisted oven-cloth, cried "I hate you, I hate you," and ran and locked herself in the bathroom.

Rodney told himself, as have so many husbands

in the same situation, that a wife can't stay locked in the bathroom indefinitely, and his idea at first was to leave her there until she came to her senses. Then, with that streak of weakness which has led more than one married man into a life of oppression and self-disgust, he wondered whether perhaps it was up to him to come to his.

It seemed incredible that he could be in the wrong, but marriage, as the vicar had said in the wedding address, was an affair of give-and-take. It was as the word vicar came into his mind that his eye fell on the tape-recorder. After a moment's thought, and aglow with righteous humility, he switched it on and pressed the play-back button. "*Momma goes here, Momma goes there, Momma goes out to ev'ry affair . . .*" Wrong tape, of course. That was Fred Simmons, when he and Edna came in for drinks on August Bank Holiday. Great character, Fred. Mabel hated

him, thought him common. Rodney fumbled through several tapes, including a short, blank one earmarked somewhat long-sightedly for baby's first cry, and at last found "Our Wedding." It was labelled in Mabel's hand. "Mabel's label," he murmured.

It took him ten minutes to get Mabel downstairs. She would not speak, but eventually allowed him to dry her eyes for her. It was success enough. "Darling," he said—"Mabel, I mean. I want you to listen to something."

It seems clear now that Rodney was more fussed than he thought, otherwise he would have taken greater care to see that he pressed the playback button for Track One, instead of that which propelled the spools in the opposite direction and played back Track Two.

It had seemed a safe bet that even in her advanced state of battened-down hysteria Mabel must be calmed and comforted by the vicar's sonorous, echoing, "Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here . . ." Then, Rodney's manly, and her own womanly, "I will." The troths plighted and given.

True, there might be moments of suspended effect during "The Voice That Breath'd"; it was the work of a somewhat scratch choir, dominated by a bass-baritone of barking egotism. But the pealing organ chords at the end would be irresistible.

Unfortunately, all these evocative items were magnetically immortalized on Track One. It was the Track Two button that Rodney now pressed, and the small sitting-room unexpectedly rang to the din of the wedding breakfast, which no one but a fool like Fred Simmons, doubly the life of any party with a microphone in his hand, would ever have put on tape at all. At first Mabel and Rodney regarded each other in stunned surprise. Rodney, recovering, stretched a hand towards the controls. Mabel, seeing, as she thought, all, struck it away, pinioned it to the arm of the sofa.

"Well, Mrs. Pring"—Fred's impersonation of a professional interviewer was corrosively inept—"having a lovely time, are we? Getting plenty to eat? Just a few words for the listeners, if you please." Mrs. Pring's laugh was like a bandsaw, even with her mouth full. She told the listeners that she'd had

two pieces of cake and intended to have a third. They were small pieces, weren't they? Would Mr. Simmons put it on the side of her plate, between the paste sandwiches and the ham-roll . . .

"Let me go," said Rodney.

"I hate you, I hate you," said Mabel.

"... don't know whether you noticed how short Mr. Tuffnell's trousers were at the back—Rodney, I suppose I must call him now. Still, they say the best-dressed men don't always make the best husbands . . ." Someone seemed to drop a tray of bottles, there was laughter and confusion.

"And you wanted me to have her for Christmas," said Rodney, struggling.

"I suppose you'd like him," shrilled Mabel.

The interviewer had moved on to Mr. Tuffnell, Senior. "... Then on the Tuesday—no, it must have been the Monday, because it was Sunday that I had the sore throat. On Monday, it was, I said to Miss Granger in the office, 'Miss Granger, I said, 'do you know what I think?' And she said, 'No,' she said. 'No, I don't, Mr. Tuffnell,' she said. 'What do you think?' she said. And I said, 'Well, I'll tell you,' I said. 'I

think I'm going to have a cold,' I said. And she said . . ."

Rodney sprang free and pressed the other button, just in time to hear himself saying, "Till death us do part . . ." It seemed to be the last straw for Mabel, who picked up the recorder, despite its weight, and hit him on the head with it. That's one reason, as Rodney said afterwards, that it wasn't fit to smuggle into Court to record the divorce proceedings. He said it was a great disappointment to him, because he could have enjoyed playing those back over and over again.

Dear Mr. Khrushchev

RESPECTED NIKITA SERGEYEVICH,—I use this form of address because it is that employed in another letter to you, which I happen to have before me. Please do not attach any significance to it. It would have been more proper, perhaps, to have addressed you by your official title, but the plain fact is that I am not absolutely certain what it is. I had it clear enough in the old B. and K. days—remember? The two of you in your white hats, with garlands round your necks and everything so jolly—but since that anti-personality-cult campaign prompted both of you to play it down and keep in the background I've got confused. Not about Bulganin, of course. He solved his personality problems all right, didn't he? Retired to the country to write a monograph on the segregation of the B., from all one hears. Not that he has much in common with Sherlock Holmes. It is

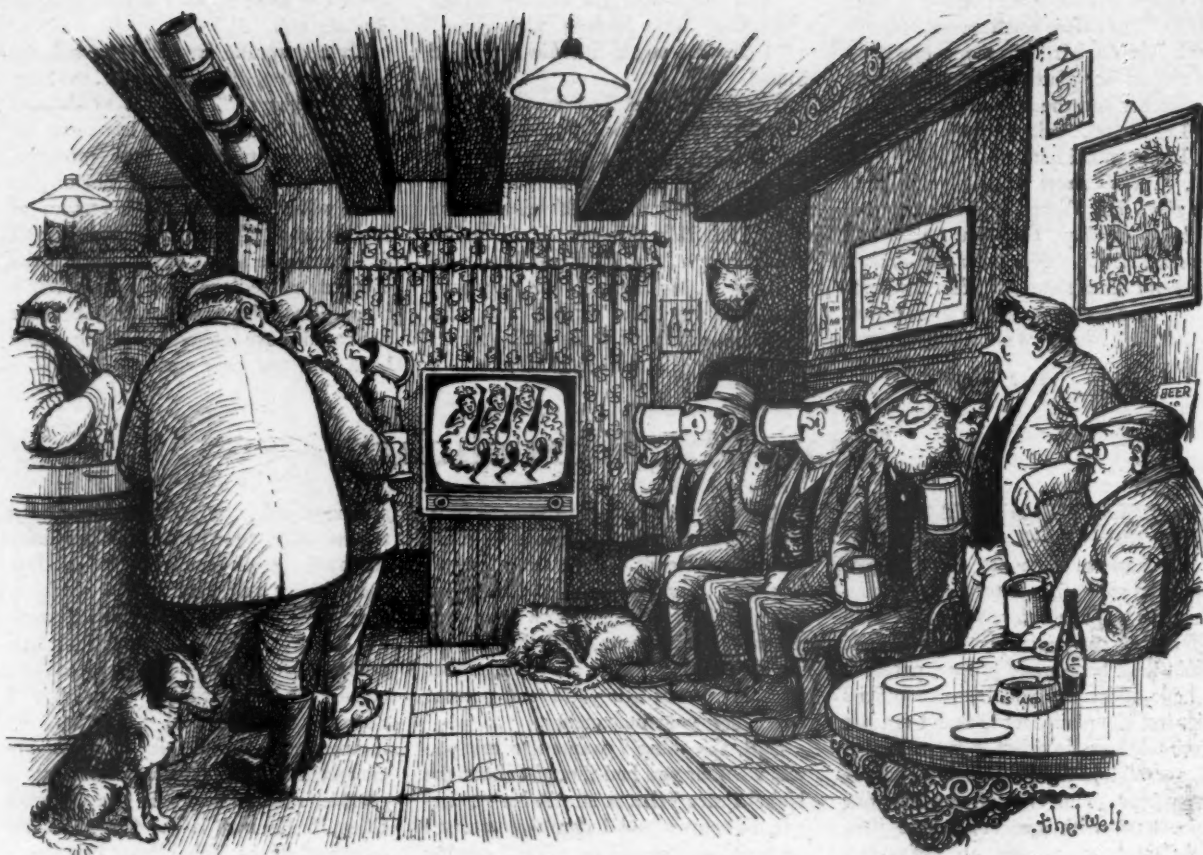
as Ophelia that I tend to picture him, sadly picking over the flowers in those withered garlands. Does he offer you rosemary ever, or pansies (that's for thoughts)? No matter. You wear your rue with a difference, and that's what makes it so difficult for me to remember under just what title you are at present concealing your personality.

Still, the thing I wanted to ask you was whether you had thought about the Nobel Peace Prize at all. It isn't in my gift, of course, and I dare say you will be suspicious of any suggestion coming from as far west as this, but what I always say is that there is nothing like airing an idea, planting the seed in people's minds, don't you agree? And as for your personal feelings—I mean if you distrust the sincerity of the proposal—I don't see why that need worry you as long as the citation is carefully worded. It is not as if Nobel Prizes as such have automatically to be regarded

as unacceptable by good Russians. On the contrary, your Professor Cherenkov accepted the physics prize a few days ago without any fuss, for his work on the "blue light," the so-called Cherenkov Effect; and looks like keeping it too, unless this French doctor succeeds in convincing the Swedish Academy of Science that the real name for the luminescence given off when highly energized atomic particles work up a notable rate of knots is the "Mallet Effect." So here is the 64,000 rouble question. If the Nobel Peace Prize were offered to you, would you turn it down?

I believe your acceptance would please Russia. My guess is that *Pravda*, once your own mind was made up, would come out in favour. The Soviet Writers' Union, in full session, would certainly acquit you of treachery. Throughout the length and breadth of Russia, from the pleasant Crimean shores, from the windy steppes and the





"Know why they put glass bottoms in tankards, son?"

bleak tundra, yes and from Poland and Hungary and Czechoslovakia and Rumania would arise a chorus of praise and gratification. Bulganin would send you columbines (that's for doves). In China it is possible that there would be a momentary jealousy, a touch of Mallet-mindedness, but not, I think, any overt adverse comment. Mao (if you will forgive a pleasantry that must inevitably lose much of its point in translation) would hold tse-tung. In the eastern world as a whole the award would be regarded as a rightful and indeed overdue recognition of your work for peace.

Such is my opinion, and you may not be disposed to quarrel with it. What will surprise you, I believe, is that there are some westerners—I don't mean fellow-travellers, but real dyed-in-the-wool hyenas like the undersigned—who also feel that you have done great things for peace.

May I, rather briefly, explain that?

We over here no longer agree with old Litvinov that Peace is indivisible. On the contrary, we think that there is your kind of peace, where everybody agrees about everything, and our kind, where we all keep arguing all the time. The advantage of your kind is that if it ever became universal there would be no more war; and it says a good deal for the strength of our dislike for it that, even so, we prefer ours. We think yours is a shade—marmoreal. Sometimes we waver a bit, some of us. After all, we say—and look at their *ballet*, we tell each other—and is our own system so perfect? we ask. It is then that our kind of peace begins to be endangered. And always along you come, in the nick of time, with some great saving stroke of genius, and restore our—what is the word?—solidarity again. Sometimes (and I know you must regret this) the operation is rather a painful one, for others. One is thinking of Hungary,

respected Nikita Sergeyevich. Sometimes, in terms of human misery, it is comparatively minor, as in this *Dr. Zhivago* affair. But the results, for the West, are uniformly therapeutic, and it is for these services that I, for one, would like to recommend you for a Nobel Prize.

Would it be agreeable to you if the citation just said "For showing the 'red light,' the so-called Pasternak Effect?"

I remain, your obedient servant.

H. F. EMIS

☆

"FRANCE TO PAY £20 M. TO CAIRO
"SUEZ CLAIMS AGREEMENT."

The Times

"FRANCE TO PAY SUEZ WAR DAMAGES
The compensation is likely to be £40 million."

News Chronicle

"SUEZ PACT MAY COST FRANCE £280
MILLION."

Daily Express

All right, how much is it in francs?

The Two Borises

By CHARLES REID

BORIS CHRISTOFF, basso, is an expatriate Bulgar based on Rome, with a crescent-shaped smile, eyes of oiled ebony and the scales of justice (small, silver-gilt, rose-framed) in his buttonhole. Because he wouldn't/couldn't learn the part of Boris Godounov in English for Covent Garden, a hundred or so other singers from such places as Bawtry, Llandrindod Wells and Port Darwin mugged up the entire opera in Russian to keep in step with our John.

Mr. Christoff reasons: "The English public, they listen to Wagner in German, to Verdi in Italian. Why not to Moussorgsky in Russian? The words, *les syllabes*, are part of the music."

"For one thing," I reply worriedly, "we haven't got the habit. For another thing there aren't any Russo-English librettos on the bookstalls at half a crown or five bob."

"*Alors*," says Mr. Christoff brightly, "you must print some."

Wispy, pearl-roped elds ride in for the performances on ejector seats out of the Diaghilev Time Layer, ready to hate everything. They wear Beecham-Drury-Lane programmes (1913) in the linings of their Bakst toques. They think it effrontery on Mr. Christoff's part to make a pass at the greatest role of the greatest of all Chaliapins, in Chaliapin's native tongue at that. Everybody else in the theatre seems pleased. Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Malik lean forward and clap benignly across the ledge of the Royal box.

I meet Christoff on his way out through the stage-door throng. He is like a swimmer doing the eight-stroke crawl.

"Hello, Mr. Red," he gleams. "I make a new death for the first time to-night. You see?"

Yes, I saw. All that "Watch your step, boyars—I'm still Czar" stuff. Then the trudge up the throne steps. Then the fatal stroke and collapse when he reached the top.

"You liked?"

"Not much. When you fell I feared you were going to roll down the steps like a sack of potatoes."

Christoff laughs a ho-ha laugh. He says "Then I make still another death. Especially for Mr. Red. Always I make new deaths. It is quite a *recherche*. I am never the same two nights. Always I change. Sometimes I sing a line here, sometimes there. And always I change by my own *volonté*."

"But, surely, the producer . . .?"

"For Mr. Graf I have great respect. He understand me. I understand him."

We turn a corner into the Strand. Christoff suddenly puts his hands before his nose as if in prayer and stands stock still. He says "I have got it, my new way to die. I die on the trone. Not on the dais. Not on the floor. On the trone. The trone is near the foot-lights. The public see my *visage*, they see my hands. But for this I need a small theatre."

He uproots himself from the Aldwych pavement and, crossing the road like a

seer, visions on and on into the night. Taxis swerve and curse. He knows just where all the boyars are going to stand and what colour of mortuary robe he'll wear on the night. Like all actor-singers with rock-like notions about production, he must, I reflect, be something of a handful backstage.

"How often have you quarrelled with producers?" I ask.

Pressing back his left thumb with the tip of his right forefinger, Christoff begins to count.

"One, Covent Garden, 1949. I am very young. My career is since two years. My artistry is *comme ci comme ça*. At Covent Garden I find absurd scenery. In the study of Boris *se trouve* a pendulum four metres high. It oscillates. I say 'With that scenery I do not sing.' I have terrible difficulty with Peter Brook."

At this point Mr. Christoff puts his hand reverently over his eyes.

"So. I abandon the dress rehearsal. I go back to my hotel. Next day they come to me. They say 'Everything is altered.' I go back. That night, for the first time in my life, I sing Boris in



"Your sitter-in wants to know if you believe in corporal punishment."

public. With no rehearsal. And with no pendulum."

Did he and Mr. Brook make it up?

Christoff opens his arms and his smile, at the same tempo, as wide as they will go. But yes! "Mr. Red, one is never an enemy for life."

He resumes the count on his finger tips. Cases two and three were Parma and Antwerp. In one case they asked him to sing Boris from start to finish on a flight of semi-circular steps. In the other case they asked him to sing before magic lantern projections. "I say in both cases 'With that *mise-en-scène* I do not sing.' I abandon the rehearsals. They alter."

Case Number four was San Francisco, 1956.

"The scenery," recalls Christoff with obvious restraint, "was 'orrible, *épouvantable, terrifiant*. Nothing to do with Moussorgsky. Nothing to do with Russia. To the producer I say 'Five years ago I am refused the visa to America. That was a misunderstanding. Now I have the visa. For this moment I wait five years. But if no change in your *mise-en-scène*, I go home. You are strong. I am strong, too.' They alter. I sing. I am happy. They are happy. It is very simple. An ikon in this place. A peasant's stove there. A boyar's chair in that place. Always it is easy to make a scene look Russian that looked before look like the *douane* at Southampton, or a baseball ground."

On the morrow, I gather, he is going into the boyars' grand council, Act IV, 10.45 p.m., in a new blue-grey surtout as a surprise for Mrs. Christoff, in the stalls. Pretty sure to surprise the boyars as well, I should say. I hope Mr. Graf knows.

Tough at the Top

By PETER DICKINSON

THE West German Government, I see, is to set up a chain of "oases of rest" to which senior executives, suffering from too much work or luxury, can be sent. They will live in sixteenth-century conditions, cook in antique utensils, draw their own water and so on. The word "sent" gives some idea of the conditions that may prevail, and as England is ambitious to emulate or out-do Western Germany nowadays, it is probable that soon we will have our own oases, that they will be even more thorough-going and will have taken a step further towards the Dark Ages.

Scene: The courtyard of a castle. Two men, DURFORD and LEWIS-HOME, are drawing water. They are dressed mainly in sacking which is held in place by a rough cross-lacing of coarse tape; wads of hay and more sacking keep their feet off the frozen cobbles. A clanking noise comes from the windlass of the well and a wheezing one from DURFORD. LEWIS-HOME looks fitter but rather fine-drawn.

DURFORD: What are you in for?

LEWIS-HOME: Raising the import quota for unsoftened softboard without consulting my opposite numbers in Housing, Labour, Ag., Defence and Transport. Without consulting anyone, in fact. Thought it might save time, I'm afraid. What about you?

DURFORD: Don't know. My board just voted me in. Only last Thursday.

LEWIS-HOME: Bad luck.

DURFORD: Been in long?

LEWIS-HOME: Done about half my time. I'll be out before Lent, thank heavens; forty days of cold bream pie would just about finish me off.

DURFORD: Christmas should be quite jolly though, shouldn't it? Yule logs, boar's heads and all. Mead too, I suppose. What's it taste like? I've always wanted to know.

LEWIS-HOME: Keep off it. It's worse than P.R.O. martinis; you get this effect in your skull. (*Slaps windlass.*) And don't you be too sanguine about Christmas. Once you've done your fortnight in the kitchens scraping wurzels with an oyster-shell you'll find that as little as possible is enough for a feast.

DURFORD: What about old Kegg? I spotted him in the kitchens when they were showing me round. Now he used to fancy his cooking.

LEWIS-HOME: Still does. Idiot. Took a fancy in August to stuff a swan with a turkey with a peacock with a goose with a duck with a capon with a pheasant with a partridge with a snipe with a blackbird with a lark with a wren. Took him weeks to get his aviary together, and lucky not to be strung up by his thumbs for poaching.

DURFORD: Sounds succulent though.

LEWIS-HOME: He shouldn't have tried it. Not without a fridge. I was sick for weeks. I don't care if I never see another leech in my life.



(The well-bucket comes to the surface; LEWIS-HOME tops up the last of the four much larger buckets they are filling and starts to help DURFORD adjust his yoke.)

DURFORD: Pity. It might have been very tasty. Reminds me of a dish they do at Ramponi's in Los Ang— Hey! Mind what you're doing! (LEWIS-HOME has dropped a bucket with a loud clang, apparently on purpose.) Now I'll have to try to scrounge some dry hay from the kennel-master.

LEWIS-HOME *(in a savage whisper)*: Keep your big trap shut and get that windlass going again. What year is it?

DURFORD *(as if proud of knowing his homework)*: 1287. *(Pause.)* A.D.

LEWIS-HOME: And what shape is the earth?

DURFORD: Oo-oh. I suppose it's flat.

LEWIS-HOME: Flat as a desk-top and square at the corners. If you sail westward from the pillars of Hercules you'll fall off the edge. And you bear that in mind, or would you rather know how thumbscrews work?

DURFORD: Is it as bad as that?

LEWIS-HOME: You listen to me. About a month ago McIntosh was holding forth about Social Credit (heresy and anachronism) at the top of his voice only just below the salt. *(That's mead for you, by the way.)* He's lucky to be alive to-day.

DURFORD: What happened?

LEWIS-HOME: Faggots wouldn't light. Then Felstead and Marques got into a typical businessman's argument about the best way to light a bonfire and—

DURFORD: You mean to say they were actually *helping* to burn him?

LEWIS-HOME: Oh, yes. You get into the swing of it, you know. You won't find yourself committing many anachronisms come Advent. Anyway, while all this was going on old Corder managed to persuade the Baron that McIntosh's bald patch might be the remains of some sort of tonsure, in which case he'd come under the Prince-Bishop's jurisdiction, over at Hacking, where they send the exhausted archdeacons. So they're still sorting that one out, and they've managed to pile up so much parchment-work in the process that it looks as if McIntosh is safe.

DURFORD *(working the windlass fiercely so that the clanking covers his question)*:



"Can't we make a fresh start, Bob—but somewhere else?"

Who is the Baron? How did he get the job?

LEWIS-HOME: You'll hear a lot of rumours, but I've got a hunch of my own. Years ago I used to lunch every Thursday at the Savoy grill with a pal from the City. It usually went on his expenses, so we did ourselves quite well—smoked salmon, Chablis, steaks, Volnay, crêpes Suzette, Bénédictine. We talked about sailing, mainly. Then I'd walk back to Whitehall and his chauffeur would drive him to the City. As I walked along the Strand I used to pass a little man in a raincoat. He didn't do anything; just watched the whispering limousines streaming eastwards. You know what the Strand's like at 3.15. He *hated* them, you could feel it; especially when it was raining.

DURFORD: Sounds a bit uncanny.

LEWIS-HOME: Ye-es. Well, I think the Baron's him.

☆

"MIGRAINE.—The British Migraine Association has been formed to further the research into and help Migraine sufferers. Annual subscription 5s. to include 80-page booklet . . ."—*The Times*

Nice large print?

LETTERS

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—Mr. Alex Atkinson, writing delightfully of the American scene from his rocking-chair, describes Utah as one of the few States that has not had a song written about it, "presumably because it doesn't even rhyme with pewter." It would, I fancy, be George Gilbey in 1912 whom I heard singing in the Argyle, Birkenhead:

*I've just come from Utah—
I went on my scootah!*

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE G. KIRKPATRICK

Bebington, Cheshire

AS YOU LIKE IT

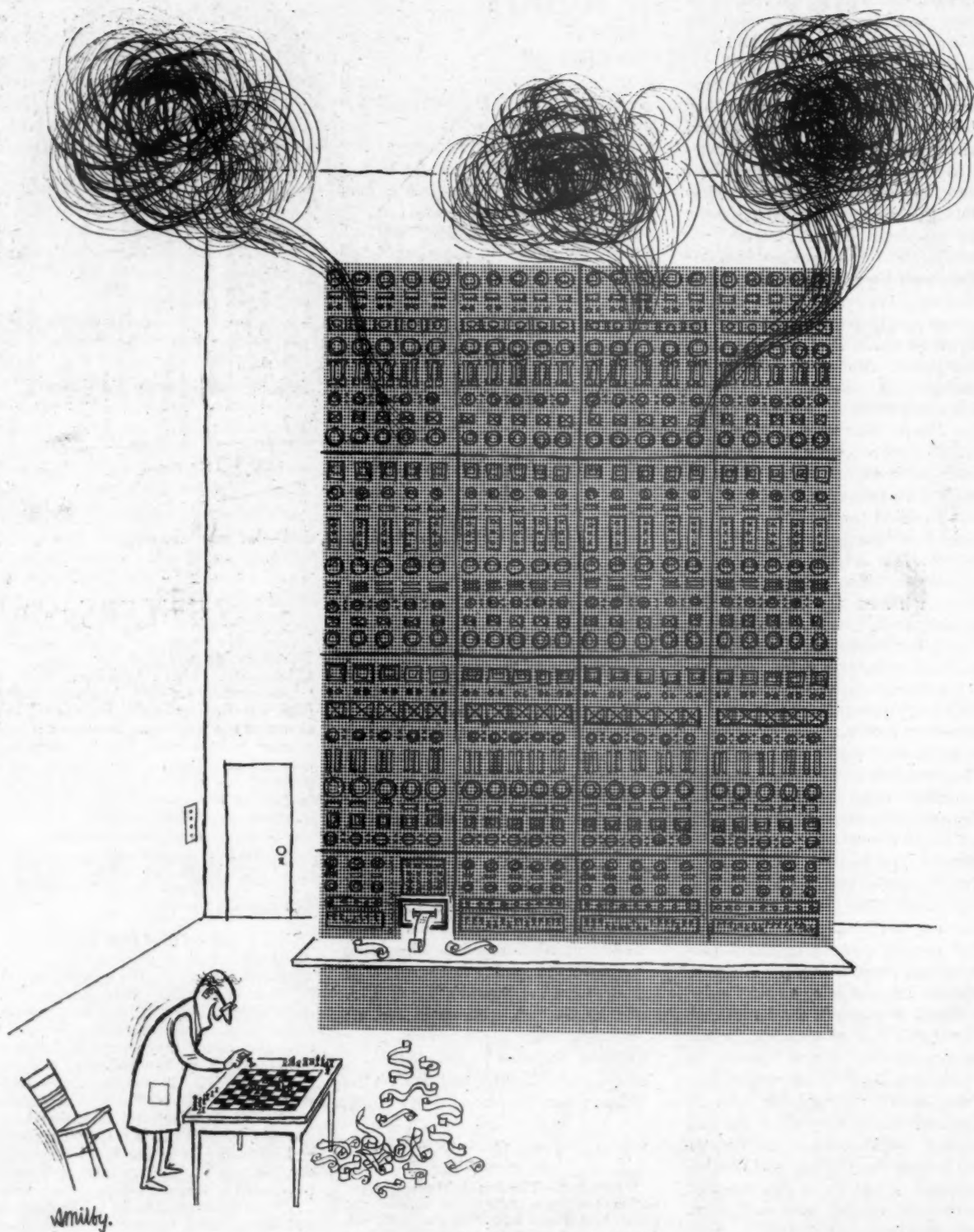
To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—Let us assure the writer from the New World that Lord Kinross was quite right to say "Instant Peat, which tastes good, as a mouthwash should," etc. Not caring much for this delicacy, *like*, however, simply will not do here. In English, *like* is not used as a conjunction like *as*, *as like* and *as are* are *unlike* as you *like*, and *like*, therefore, should be restricted to qualifying nouns and such-like. "I like Ike," they may say, but not "I, like Ike talks to Foster, have used a few expletives in my time . . ."—or what you like as I, like Ike, am not like Ike talks, but like Ike, if you like!

Yours faithfully,

J. A. ORDE

Gosforth, Northumberland



"Checkmate."

DAILY ^{2½d} RETCH

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1958

A funeral
the neighbours
will envy!

We gave you a racehorse—we gave you a pub—we paid your debts and your income-tax. Now—

WE'LL PAY FOR YOUR FUNERAL!

The "DAILY RETCH" scoops the lot again with this fabulous and exciting offer. No other newspaper in the world has given such a prize before.

We make your dreams come true! Now you can have a millionaire's funeral that will astound your friends and make your family the envy of all—and it won't cost you or yours a penny!

Cars, coffin, shroud, and the headstone of your choice—the RETCH pays for the lot. Even the insertion in the "Deaths" Column of "The Times."

How's that for a prize?

Real Brass

Just imagine the luxury of a satin-quilted, genuine solid oak casket with real brass fittings. The chicness and durability of the latest American-type zipper-fastening shroud. The biggest,

shiniest Rolls-Royce hearse to be obtained.

As Sir James Barrie put it, dying's gonna be an awfully big adventure!

You can win all this by entering our simple competition TO-DAY.

Consolation prizes:

And of course there will be plenty of consolation prizes for the runners-up—stereophonic LP records of Handel's "Dead March in Saul," copies of the *Morticians' Yearbook*, and tickets for the fully-choral service of the lucky winner of the first prize.

Tell your friends about it. They too may want an opportunity to win a glamorous free funeral.



At the funeral of Mrs Gladys Strout, mother of rock 'n' roll singer Terry Jeans, the flowers were valued at over £500. This is the kind of funeral you can have if you win our great new competition.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

Just arrange the six following methods of disposing of your friends in your order of preference. Put the method you consider best at the top and so on down to the method you approve of least.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>A. PUSHING OVER A CLIFF</p> <p>B. SELLING INTO SLAVERY</p> <p>C. SHOOTING INTO SPACE</p> <p>D. DROPPING INTO WELL</p> | <p>E. IMMERSION IN ACID BATH</p> <p>F. LEAVING TO THE VULTURES</p> <p>The <i>Daily Retch</i> has appointed the following experts to judge the competition:</p> <p>LORD GRAVEMAN, Chairman of Amalgamated Tobacco and Crematoria, Ltd.</p> <p>MARION SIXFOOT, Matron of the Hampshire Necropolis.</p> <p>JANE MAMMARY, star of <i>In Hallowed Ground</i> and other film successes.</p> <p>HENRY BUNN, Editor of the <i>Daily Retch</i>.</p> |
|--|--|

For full particulars of how to enter, and FREE coupon which must be cut out of your DAILY RETCH and enclosed with each entry, turn to page 9.

Toby Competitions

No. 42—Fame

"SINGLE-speech" Hamilton: William Gerard Hamilton (1729-96) made a celebrated maiden speech and no other in the six years he sat as M.P. for Petersfield. Competitors are invited to supply a nickname and brief explanatory biography for an imaginary character in English History. Limit: 100 words.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries (any number but each on a separate piece of paper and accompanied by a separate entry token, cut out from the bottom left-hand corner of this page) by first post on Friday, November 21, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 42, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 39

(As You Like It)

Competitors were reminded of Keats' request: "Give me books, fruit, French wine and fine weather and a little music out of doors, played by somebody I do not know," and were required to devise a set of circumstances which might be considered idyllic by a Football League referee, an actress, a teenager, an English Prime Minister, a bookie, or a waiter.

There were a great many suggestions for heart-cries from teenagers, which showed a remarkable unanimity of thought, but very little sparkle in approach. The next most widely chosen character was the referee, who emerged as a terrified figure, so much hated on all sides that one wondered why he hadn't thrown up the job long ago. The English Prime Minister attracted some attention, but his requests, surprisingly enough, tended to be rather pedestrian. There was a good deal of pathos in some of the lists suggested for the actress, as well as a generous helping of traditionally uncomplimentary (envious?) comments about her character and behaviour. There were comparatively few attempts to compose an idyll for the waiter, but it is to one of these that the prize has been awarded. The successful entrant was:

MISS JOANNA LARGE
30 OVERSTONE ROAD
HARPENDEN

HERTS.

and her entry was as follows:

WAITER

Give me a watchman's brazier on an autumn night, a pound of chestnuts to roast, a gallon of tea brewing in a bucket and an arm round the girl who sells nails in Woolworths.

The usual book-token prizes for

runners-up have been awarded to the senders of the entries quoted below:

ACTRESS

Give me that first show, the frightful play, my gauche entrance, the loss of memory, the catcalls, the boos, the lousy reviews, the ordeal of facing the second night. Give me all that and take away thirty years.—Robert Welbank, 17 Brian Avenue, Norwich

Give me above all an eternal bloom and texture 'neath my eyes to defy the tread of the crow. Then a husband who is playwright, rich, not too photogenic, but youthful—and on my darker days not jealous. Thereafter bring wine, furs, real friends, and please, my dark glasses!—John Comcam, 3 Chillingworth Gardens, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, Middlesex

Give me a pleasing part, a favourable press, abounding health and a sickly under-study; and give me ability or bust.—David Hebden, 36 Clanricarde Gardens, London, W.2.

Give me a good part in a play that will run for years. Give me good notices in papers that will be read by millions. Then give me a good meal on a large tablecloth and let me take off my shoes.—Elizabeth Ostler, 39 Warwick Avenue, Coventry

REFeree

Give me a placid summer's scene, an umpire's coat and a cricket green where the rural gentry direct their criticisms to the players alone and I am the undoubted authority, relaxed and self-assured, oblivious to the past months' provocation and abuse from the angry scowling terraces.—D. C. Hutchins, Flat 5, 12 High Street, Watford, Herts.

Give me a long sunny summer day and set me down beside a wide spread of turf margined by silent trees and peopled by "Flannelled Fools," whose progress matches that of the lazily floating clouds.—F. A. Stonehouse, "Sunnybrae," Papcastle, Cocker-mouth, Cumberland

☆

Snow

THE flakes are black against the sky,
Like raisins in an uncooked pie,
But white against the hawthorn hedge,
Like seagulls on a rocky ledge.

And where they lie the ground is white,
That was the colour of the night;
The sky above is twilight-grey,
That was the colour of the day.

The scheme of things is thus reversed;
The heavens sombre and accursed,
The sinful earth in bridal dress,
Superb in shining spotlessness.

And now the sky is black as peat,
The earth as white as any sheet.
Strange to reflect the time has been
When one was blue, the other green.

R. P. LISTER

CHESTNUT GROVE

George Morrow's first drawing appeared in *Punch* in 1906 and his last in 1954. For most of that period his curious contributions appeared almost every week.



C.I.D. MAN TRYING TO IDENTIFY AN ABSCONDING CASHIER (EX-ATHLETE) FROM THE ONLY PHOTOGRAPH HE CAN GET OF HIM. [Inset: THE PHOTOGRAPH].

November 20 1929



The inside story of the country, by the man who has never been inside it.

7

HOLLYWOOD AND ENVIRONS

THE first thing that happened when I reached the Californian border was that grim-faced guards hustled me into a hut and turned me upside-down.

I had already assured their people in Grosvenor Square, W.1, that I had no concrete plans for overthrowing the United States government, but that wasn't enough for the Californians: they wanted to know how I was fixed for plant pests.

"Look here," I said recklessly, "I have nothing to declare and I claim the Fifth Amendment." So they pinioned my arms and went through all my pockets, finally laying on the table eight dandelion seeds, an old piece of Formby asparagus, a life-size rubber beetle for dropping in people's beer and making them laugh, and some things they said were ants' eggs. To make matters worse, in the boot of my convertible they found a boll weevil.

"What the hell are you doing with this boll weevil?" they said. "What d'you *think* I'm doing with it," I said, for my keen native sense of fun had not deserted me: "giving it a lift? I demand to see the British Consul!"

"You pipe down," they said, and they ferreted in the turn-ups of my trousers until they found some bits of ground-elder root, a mealy bug, two red

spiders and what appeared on the face of it to be a carrot fly. "Good God," they said, "this guy's loaded with the stuff. Lock the door!"

Eventually, after two days, during which time they fumigated my knapsack, sprayed me with D.D.T. and gave me a crew cut, I was taken out of quarantine and allowed to proceed, on the strict understanding that I didn't plant any blackcurrants in the San Joaquin Valley.

I would be one of the last to deny that foreign travel is an agreeable way of passing the time if you've nowhere else to go, but I'm bound to admit that bad luck tends to dog a good many of my footsteps on this trip. I had made a special point of visiting California (it is a long, narrow place down the bottom left-hand side, bravely staring Red China in the face and notable as the world's chief source of syrup of figs and tennis players) for the express purpose of seeing the annual Horned Toad Derby at Coalinga. You can imagine my chagrin, therefore, when I found that this spectacle takes place in May, which meant that I was both three months too late and eight months too early. It was a bitter blow, certainly; but I was greatly consoled when they consented to show me the stadium in which the Derby is actually held, with seats for sixty thousand and standing room for twice that number. I also saw the totalisator buildings, the hot-dog stands, the judge's box, the photo-finish camera, the stables, the paddock, the weighing-in room, and the living

accommodation for Horned Toad handlers, vets, owners and breeders. The Horned Toads themselves were scattered far and wide in their various training quarters, undergoing the most rigorous exercise and being injected with vitamins the livelong day. However, it needed only a slight stretch of the imagination to picture the scene on that thrilling day in May, when Coalinga is loud with the thunder of Horned Toads' feet, and excitement reaches fever pitch as the favourite turns into the home straight, croaking like crazy, with the Members' Enclosure awash with Californian champagne and maddened punters throwing sand in the eyes of the outsider as he tries to hop through on the rails. Add to all this the raucous cries of the fortune-tellers and three-card trick concessionaries, the strident music of the calliopes and carousels, and the distant hooting of pleasure yachts in San Francisco Bay, and you will have some idea about what makes California the Mecca of Horned Toad Derby enthusiasts the world over.

Other people go there too, of course, for where else but in Glendale, to take a single example of the marvels that await the conscientious traveller, could you hope to be shown a reproduction of the church where Annie Laurie worshipped (free, 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.)? Where else but in El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles, to take another, could you expect to see a citizen being arrested for shooting rabbits from a streetcar?

One thing they lack in California is

rain. It happened in Monterey that I fell into conversation with a lady who was leaning out of the window of her converted Mission house to pick a few oranges for supper, and I casually asked her what the mean annual rainfall might be in, say, San Francisco.

"We do not have rainfall," she said, removing the red rose from her mouth and smiling graciously. "We have precipitation. 20.51 inches in San Francisco, if you must know, and 14.54 inches in Los Angeles."

Apart from that it has been claimed that California produces more Nobel Prize winners than Texas. For all I know this may be a notable achievement, but we must set against it the fact that California also contains two hundred acres called Disneyland, in which are incorporated Adventureland, Frontierland, Fantasyland and To-morrowland. This valuable piece of real estate lies twenty-two miles southwest of Los Angeles on the Santa Ana Freeway, but it need not disturb your life if you are prepared to make a wide detour. I was prepared, and in this way I managed to see a good deal of the State and find out what makes it tick so loudly.

I went to a place called Carmel, which was established as a retreat for artists and writers in 1904. I don't know what artists and writers wanted to hide from in 1904, and I don't know whether they had to provide their own pencils and paper, but there are still some of them there to-day. They are fed at four o'clock every afternoon. What they are chiefly hiding from now is income tax. I drove along El Camino Real, which is translated as U.S. Highway 101. I saw a church built in the shape of a barrel at Asti. I saw policemen on the beat in San Francisco. They chase burglars up and down perpendicular streets in convertibles with very bouncy suspension, and when the burglars climb on to the rigging of the Golden Gate Bridge and shake their fists, they shoot them through the head from behind packing-cases. The burglars then fall dead into the harbour, and very few trials are necessary. This does not entirely discourage burglary, but it certainly gives the police an edge on their buddies at week-end duck-shoots. I asked about Saroyan in the Sacramento Valley, and the simple peasants said "Ah, yes, life is good and sad and true and fine and funny and cockeyed and there are

flowers and children and Chesterfields and Sibelius and there is love and the movement of the planets, and who could ask for more in Sleepy Valley?"

I came across an encampment of members of the "beat" generation, who were then prevalent in California. They seemed to be mostly around forty years old, and were living on remittances from home in a collection of derelict caravans. I passed a pleasant evening with them, drinking methylated spirits for kicks and throwing lumps of earth at passers-by. They spend a good deal of their time reading one another's novels aloud and crying. Before I left I gave them a parcel of cuddly toys, for which they were aggressively grateful. "Nobody understands us," they told me. "But that's not our chief misery. The day's going to come when *everybody* understands us, and it's going to be absolute hell." I drove deep into the interior of a Sequoia Redwood tree, where I met an old man who remembered Bret Harte, but not very clearly. I saw Los Angeles. It is chiefly given over to private eyes. There are more of them to the square inch than in any other city I know. They sit in shabby offices drinking Scotch with their hats on and waiting for loosely-dressed blondes to drift up in cream convertibles to offer them a five thousand dollar retaining fee. "My husband is a pig and has gone on a business trip to Santa Anita," murmur the loosely-dressed blondes languorously. "Do come to my Spanish-style beach house, where we can be alone. I think someone is going to be murdered." I visited some poets. They were sitting in the desert in deck-chairs, passing round a bottle of mescaline and arranging twigs in vases according to the principles of Zen. Their conversation was fragile, and they spent their evenings patiently reading through their press-cuttings and hoping to attain *satori*.

Throughout the State I found a considerable preoccupation with death and the disposal of cadavers, and I put it down to the climate, which is so monotonously healthy that the morticians have to bribe people into dying by offering them attractive surroundings for their ashes, on deferred terms. Since the natives are apt to be depressingly long-lived, the morticians are now beginning to advertise in newspapers as far away as Minnesota. "Come to

California and Die!" they urge. "You'll Never Regret It!" Needless to say, fortunes are being made out of lead-lined caskets and non-spill embalming fluid, and on the wall of my hotel in Pasadena there was a notice which read: "In case of earthquakes or fatal stick-ups during the night, visitors are requested to leave the telephone number of their regular mortician with the desk clerk. Please also deposit five dollars for shaving and laying-out—returnable in the event of survival. We provide the pennies for your eyes. Rest in peace with the compliments of the Management."

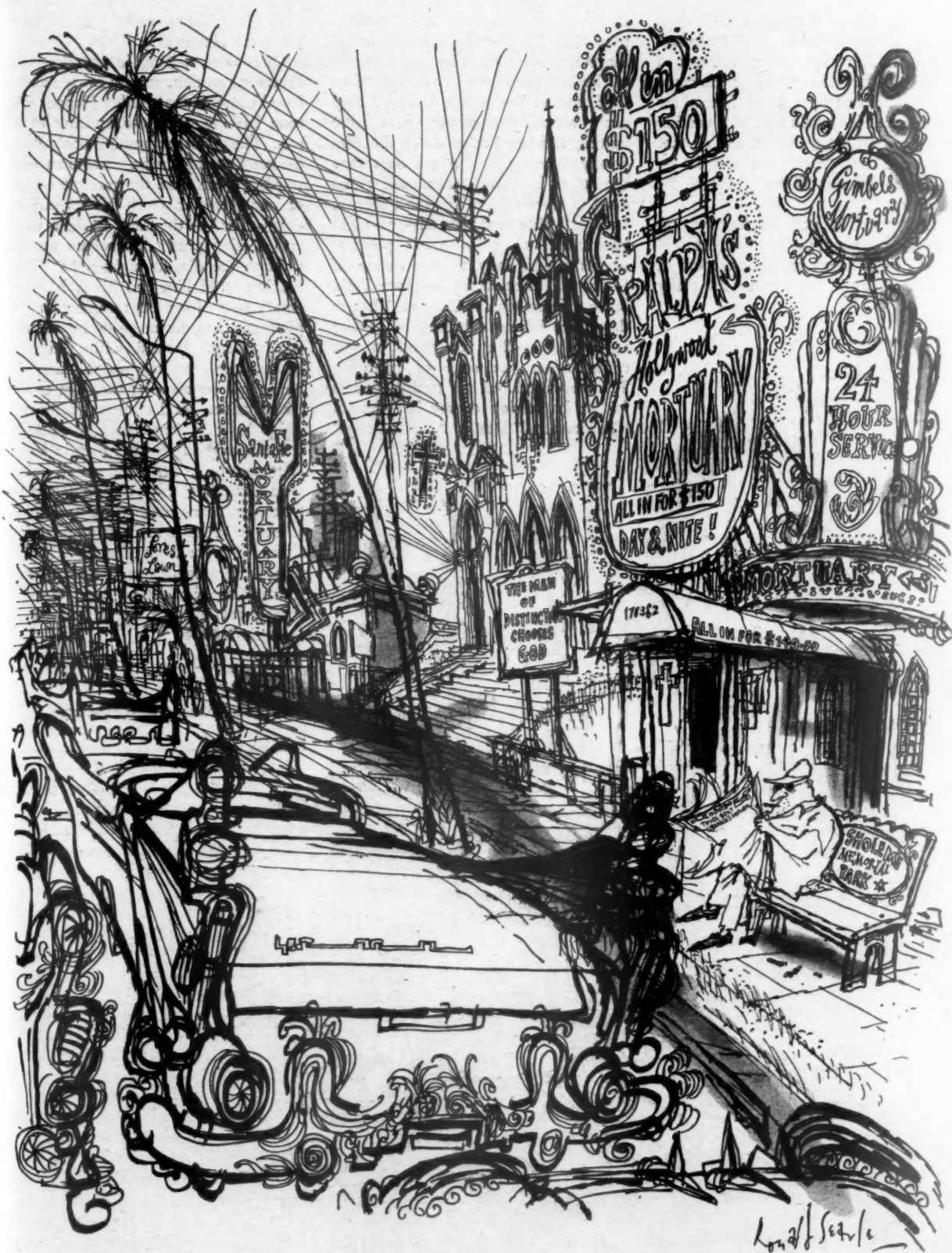
In Los Angeles I met a lady of twenty-nine who showed me the box which will contain her earthly remains. She keeps it in her bottom drawer. There is a small compartment for book-matches, and when you lift the lid it plays "Solveig's Song" from the *Peer Gynt Suite*. "It is my favourite number," she said.

It also appears that Californians are very holy. Where an ordinary person might spend a wet Saturday clearing out the lumber room, a Californian is quite likely to sit down with a scratch-pad and draw up the rules of a new religion. The result is that every third man you meet is a sect in himself, and during my short stay I lived through the end of the world twice (first on the Tuesday, and again on the Friday), and played gin rummy with a lady who had just spent forty thousand dollars building a temple where she and her sister-in-law can worship a smooth flat stone which forms the exact centre of the universe.

"We found it quite by chance," she told me, "on a vacant lot."

She said that she and her sister-in-law had the whole religion to themselves at the moment, but they were hoping to persuade her brother, a travelling salesman, to do some proselytizing on a commission basis. "The main plank in our platform is that human beings are a figment of the imagination," she said, "but we aim to add a few other beliefs, to make the prospectus attractive to younger people."

Finally, I gave in and went to Hollywood. Hollywood, of course, had tried to get me for years, because my books all have such pretty jackets. I had resisted stubbornly—partly out of pride, partly on account of the fare. But that



was long ago, in the days when Louise Fazenda, Stepin Fetchit, Karl Dane and George K. Arthur were still names to conjure with. What a change has come over Hollywood since then! I stood for an hour at Hollywood and Vine waiting to be offered a screen test, and all that happened was that I was run in on suspicion by the Highway Patrol for being on foot.

Hollywood is well on the way to becoming a ghost town. You can still meet people who remember the era of moving pictures, but all they are really

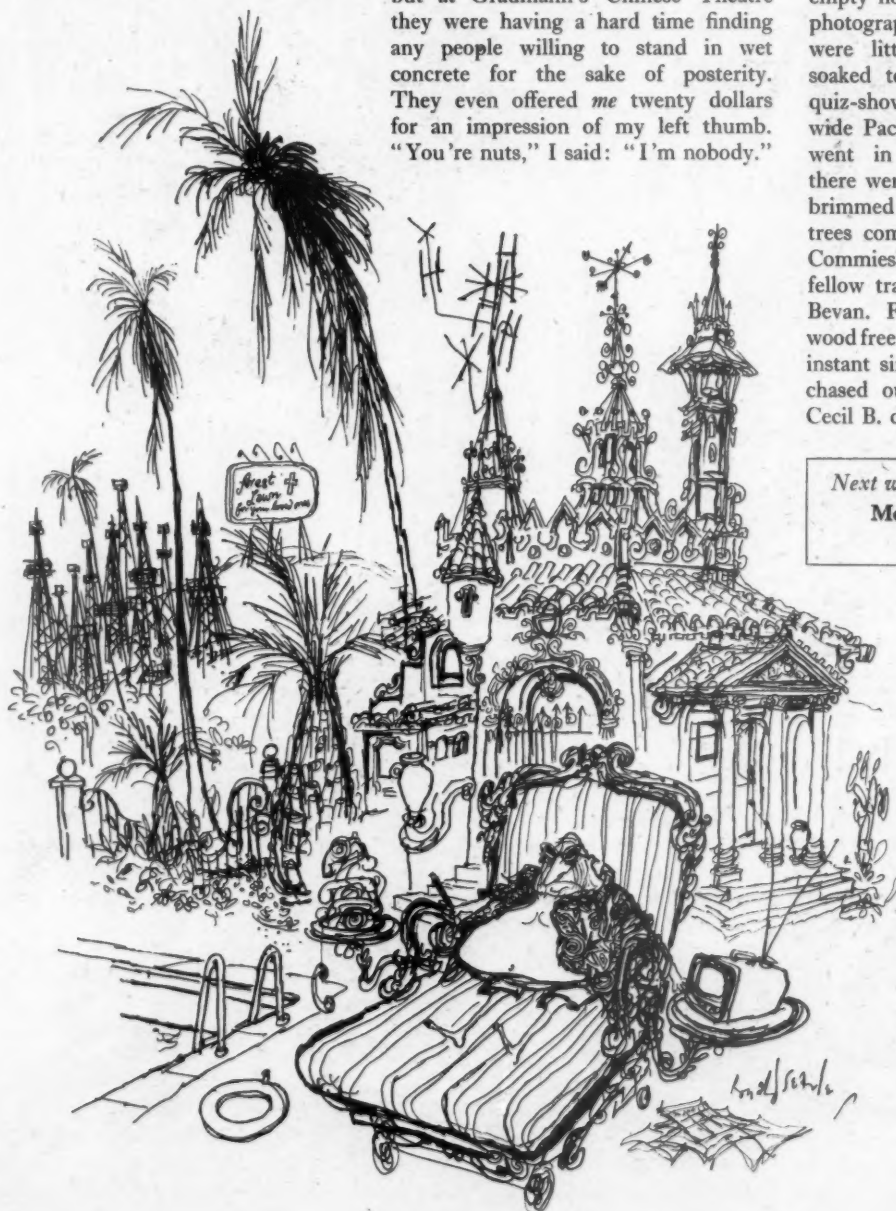
interested in is getting into a thirty-nine-week TV situation-comedy series, like everybody else. The stately domes of Beverly Hills are crumbling into dust, and in the Brown Derby I only came across five people who were writing satirical books about the film colony, whereas in the old days they used to sit in serried ranks, each with a bowl in front of him for hush money. I was still able to see the day-and-night procession of grey-haired pilgrims wending their way to the shrine of Rudolph Valentino in Longpre Park, but at Graumann's Chinese Theatre they were having a hard time finding any people willing to stand in wet concrete for the sake of posterity. They even offered *me* twenty dollars for an impression of my left thumb. "You're nuts," I said: "I'm nobody."

"So what?" they said. "So at least you got a gimmick."

Owls were nesting in the deserted, cavernous studios, and on every hand I heard rumours that Hedda Hopper will soon have to switch to knitting twin-sets. The private swimming-pools along Sunset Boulevard were overgrown with weeds. Gone were the carefree shouts of photogenic ex-truck-drivers pulling down their ten thousand bucks a week and chasing pneumatic beauty queens through the dim-lit night-clubs. The beaches at Malibu and Santa Monica, empty now of starlets romping for the photographers from girly magazines, were littered instead with Daiquiri-soaked television moguls thinking up quiz-show questions at the edge of the wide Pacific. And always, wherever I went in this sun-drenched suburb, there were the lynx-eyed men in snap-brimmed hats, lurking behind palm-trees compiling their classified lists of Commies, near-Commies, ex-Commies, fellow travellers and open admirers of Bevan. For the work of keeping Hollywood free from sin has never ceased for an instant since the first un-American was chased out of town for sniggering at Cecil B. deMille.

Next week:

Moonshine and History





A Little Fire

THERE has been a little fire—
 Not expensive, it is true,
 But the consequence is dire,
 And I wonder what to do.
 There has been a little fire,
 Many people will be hurt,
 And it wasn't my desire,
 Though it may be my desert.
 There has been a little fire
 In my "study," at the desk
 Where I toil until I tire—
 Very local, quite grotesque,
 For the flames, like clever setters,
 Concentrated on my *letters*!
 Nothing else, but—how unjust!—
 Every blessed letter's dust,
 Every courteous little letter
 Which recalled that I'm a debtor,
 All the notes of what is due
 To the Inland Revenue
 (This is terrible because
 I've forgotten what it was),
 Letters asking me to speak
 Six or seven times a week,
 Letters hungering for me
 (Though they can't afford a fee),

Derby, Aberdeen, or Dover
 ('Two days' work, and one hangover),
 Letters asking for a course
 Of instruction in divorce,
 Letters that would make you weep,
 Letters that disturb my sleep,
 Letters which lay waste the days
 When one should be writing plays;
 Letters, trusting, which enclose
 Manuscripts in verse or prose,
 And request me for a clue
 How to write—as if I knew!
 Letters asking, full of frost,
 If that manuscript is lost;

Letters with some nasty stings,
 Calling me the strangest things,
 And a few I read with pride,
 Saying they are on my side;
 Moving letters from the City,
 One more Cause, one more Committee;
 Letters by the dozen which
 Seem to think that I am rich,
 Just some tickets for the Ball,
 Just ten guineas for a stall;
 Letters, nice, that need a thank,
 Letters, beastly, from the Bank;

Letters I am asked to sign
 With a crowd of eight or nine,
 But I am not sure I should,
 And the English isn't good;
 Letters oozing from the tray
 While one wonders what to say;
 Letters like a flood of doom
 Slowly spreading round the room;
 Letters which collect and crawl
 On the carpet, up the *wall*;
 Letters, letters, letters, letters
 Hang and clank on me like fetters;
 Letters yelling "You're a cad!"
 Letters, letters drive me MAD!

Yes, I know that there are many
 Good old men who don't get any,
 Yes, I know that I should be
 Glad that people think of me.
 But for this event, I vow,
 They would all be answered now.
 Do not think the door is shut.

Write again, my friends, or wire.
 This is temporary, but

There *has* been a little FIRE.

A. P. H.

FOR
WOMEN

Busts will be Supple

"GRÂCE à sa nouvelle coupe révolutionnaire, la gaine W. ne bouge pas d'un centimètre de la journée, avec ou sans jarretelles." We were at the FESTIVAL DE LA LIGNE 1959 and this comfortable assurance about the staying powers of the new season's corsets, came over the loud-speaker in the soothing but manly voice of Paris's compère de charme, Monsieur Francis Valbray.

The idea of calling in Monsieur Valbray for the job of sponsoring this year's showing of belts, girdles, roll-ons, foundations, corselettes, garter-panties, bras and falsies, presented *in situ* on model girls (to the accompaniment of soft music from a hidden piano), was to give added dignity, we suppose, to an occasion which, for the first time, had graduated into the status of a *conference de presse*.

Whether the end was gained is open to controversy; for the press conference approach meant that the scope of this always rather embarrassing event had widened to include a surprising number

of male journalists as well as a considerably enlarged posse of photographers eager, from preferential places at the end of the cat-walk, to put on record what the American corset ads call "the smoothly plotted lines" of the models.

Keen interest in the smooth plotting of the 1959 lines was, however, legitimate; for it was going to be exciting to see how the top-ranking corsetiers of Paris would come to terms with the new Empire line. And to explain what we learned in this matter that morning, I cannot do better than pass you back to Monsieur Francis Valbray at his microphone.



"Model 25: Peter-Pan Impromptu Empire Line belt in a new patented net is reinforced with free-moving woven bands that give 20 per cent more support to the hips than to other parts of the

body."

The thing, then, it seems this season is to strap in our hips for all we are worth and let out the rest; though the role of the *soutien-gorge* generally still

appears to be to sustain what is already there and/or to supplement what is not. "The bra Sissi," cooed Monsieur Valbray, "is in double nylon lace, fitted inside with a complete lining of Ador foam *qui avantage la poitrine*."

After clearing this hurdle our compère was able to relax with the next model, "Ref. 58/1," which, without any foam, laid claim in simple, manly language to "making the most of the bust."

Almost all models this season—girdles, foundations and bras—are in nylon. Yet a newcomer, Rilsan, which I seem to remember is a by-product of rice, is to the fore, but used invariably (does Rilsan tickle?) with an edging of Ban Lon which, Monsieur Valbray assured us, is *très doux à porter*.

But the real news that morning was the emergence of the *buste souple à la Joséphine*. The bust has always played an important part in feminine fashions. There was *la poitrine épanouie* of the Bell Epoque, the perk of the American sweater-girl period, *la poitrine menue* of the Dior and Chanel reaction; but if the *buste souple* does take on it will be the first time in living memory that it is encouraged to sag.

PHYLLIS HEATHCOTE

Variety Performance

THE weapon most destructive to the home, family life, and all civilized living could be said to be the tin-opener. On the other hand, the woman who has a tin-opener in her armoury is never in danger of losing her reputation as a wise virgin; it is the culinary equivalent of keeping her lamps filled.

Rather naturally, the firm of Heinz

endorses the second of these opinions. Far from tin-opening being a discouragement to imaginative cooking, they say it can and should be an aid to more varied dishes. In this belief they launched last week in London a new variety called Heinz Recipe Soups: Tomato, Mushroom, Chicken, Ox-tail, and Vegetable. They are condensed, and to use simply as soups you double the quantity with water; but they can

also be used undiluted as sauces and as the basis for different dishes—stews, casseroles, risottos, fish-dishes. Recipes are given with each tin, and the cook blessed with extempore abilities will enjoy exercising her own ingenuity.

It is a hundred years since Henry J. Heinz, then a boy of sixteen, grew at his home near Pittsburgh better vegetables than anybody else. Instead of expecting the world, on Emerson's mouse-trap

theory, to make a beaten path to his door the boy took his vegetables to the local shop. One day, his mother's streaming eyes as she grated horse-radish gave him the idea of selling grated horse-radish in bottles—horse-radish without tears: the first of the fifty-seven varieties. That was in 1860. In 1886 Henry J. Heinz arrived at Fortnum and Mason's in Piccadilly in a hansom cab with five sample cases of his products. They bought the lot. Ever since then, what is good enough for Heinz is good enough for Fortnum and Mason.

Heinz is still a family business, the present very active head being a great-grandson of the founder. In one way only are they disloyal to their origins—horse-radish no longer plays a part in the variety performance. Surely, it should have been kept on as an old retainer for sentimental reasons.

ALISON ADBURGHAM

☆

Rest Assured

WITH that sandpaper throat and that drum-kit in the brain you need a day in bed. Everybody in the house will tell you so, especially your husband, who is leaving for the office in ten minutes anyway and having dinner at Bernardo's with a wealthy client.

Angela's, quite old enough now to get the young ones off to school and Mrs. Drupe, the Daily, is a positive sensation in a crisis. So just sink back among those plump-resisting pillows and relax. Let your hot thoughts run barefoot through the lush green grass of pleasant memories while Angela's spirit grows rich on trust and responsibility and Mrs. Drupe earns twelve and sixpence overtime.

Yes, you will hear Maria screaming for the omelet nobody but you can make, and the postman hammering unheeded at the door with Granny's long-awaited seven pairs of mittens. You will hear the crash of crockery (or was it the kitchen window?) and the rush of water from the left-on bathroom tap. You will hear Amanda falling down the stairs and Peter pulling all the debris over him from a too-high shelf. But you will just go right on running through the grass.

Then Mrs. Drupe will enter, bright

and confident as always, telling you not to worry since the plumber's on his way and Georgie's nose has now stopped bleeding. She will prop you up in bed and set a breakfast-tray before you. Bless her heart, she couldn't find the tray-cloth but she's used one of "his" handkerchiefs instead, and she couldn't lay hands on the tin opener or the morning paper, so she's improvised with a glass of Welfare Orange Juice, thick toast, and the *TV Times*.

As you sit there drawing lazy patterns in the toast-ash, all the little ones will tumble in to say good-bye before they leave for school. Peter with sticking-plaster on his cheek, Francesca with odd stockings and Penelope with coffee down her gym-slip. Georgie isn't there at all.

Angela looks proud. You must reward her with a little jar of face-cream, which may help to cure this sudden craze she's got for Never Getting Married. Maria starts to cry and says she isn't going off to school till Mummy's better. Everybody else joins in (so touching!) until Mrs. Drupe comes roaring, "What about the laundry? And the butcher's on the 'phone; no stewing-steak."

You suddenly feel better, clawing out towards your dressing-gown with gaiety.

Light as a feather, especially in the head, you dance away to meet the plumber on the landing and the doctor nearly halfway up the stairs, slip on a Scrabble-tile and catch your leg in Peter's satchel-strap as you hurtle to the hall. Your final conscious thoughts are that you need an extra pint for custard, and that when the gas-man calls you have to tell him what a funny noise the back two jets are making.

Oh, yes, you lose your Daily! And your husband, summoned home, loses the client waiting at Bernardo's. But you have your day in bed. In fact, a week.

HAZEL TOWNSON

Vague Vogue


I ONLY need a bodice small,
A waistline high, to get
The latest fashion of them all,
The Empire silhouette.

But do I have to look demure,
Or fierce, or nicely blended?
I can't be certain till I'm sure
Which Empire is intended.

CAROLE PAINE



"How many purposes should one have?"



In the City

The Cheapest Thing in Britain

THE efforts of the Government to refloat the economy must bring to some minds echoes of Æsop's Fable about the frog trying to blow itself out to the size of a bull and coming to a sad end in the process. The expansionist measures have followed one another with impressive, and some say ominous, speed. No wonder the stock markets are booming and that more and more investors are forsaking the "funds" and taking joyously to the glitter and hazards of equities. There is a great deal of common sense and realism in this choice.

The frog conducted its inflationary experiments on extremely marshy, slippery ground. There is a much firmer basis for the puffing and blowing of H.M.G. ("Please call it reflation," says Mr. Heathcoat Amory, "and not reinflation.") The basis is in fact solid gold with a small admixture of dollars. The outstanding economic miracle of the past year and one month lies in the thirteen consecutive monthly increases in Britain's gold and dollar reserve. Such a thing has never happened before. From £660 million reached in the dead centre of the autumn 1957 hurricane, the reserve has come up progressively to £1,134 million—a fabulous 72 per cent rise in this comparatively short period. This is not the result of the return of bad or "hot" money to London. On the contrary sterling balances held here on overseas account have fallen over this period, so that Britain as banker at the centre of the sterling area has strengthened her position in two ways: by increasing her cash reserve and reducing her deposits.

This double reinforcement makes it possible and safe for the Government to take the calculated risk of its recent reflationary policy. The other near miracle of the past year is that for the first time since the end of the war the purchasing power of sterling has kept more or less steady. The cost-of-living

index is no higher to-day than it was at the beginning of the year, at any rate for those who live according to the index.

The economy certainly needs a boost. Industrial production is running some 3 or 4 per cent below the level of a year ago and not much higher than that of three years ago. This performance is not good enough judged by any standards, and Ministers, with one eye on the rising curve of unemployment and the other on the 1959 election, are giving the benefit of every doubt to the need for improving the act.

With the business recovery in the United States now full of dynamic zest and Wall Street behaving accordingly, there is no reason to doubt that the rise in our own market will continue. The *Financial Times* Index of Industrial Ordinary shares has broken through its 1958 high, but it is still well below the figure that was reached in July 1955. Moreover, at a little over 210 it is no more than about twice what it was in



In the Country

Four Boards, Two Trestles . . .

IT is odd that with the repertory companies in a desperate plight, you can't throw a stone in the countryside nowadays without hitting a theatre. Off duty, most of them are village halls, parish halls or Women's Institutes, but these have their drawbacks. Every village company finds sooner or later that its dress rehearsal mustn't take more than two hours because of the Flower Show, or that it can't have the hall on Tuesdays or Fridays ever because of the Scouts and the Highland Dancing Society.

Money matters too. It's sound business for a village company to produce plays with large casts because everyone will sell tickets to his family and friends. But most village halls have tiny stages, so that with a cast of more than six the action appears to take place in a railway carriage.

A theatre built of brick is expensive and concrete isn't much cheaper, and a

the base period of July 1935. In no set of sterling values has the wartime and post-war inflation been so modestly reflected as in the pricing of sterling industrial ordinary shares.

Rising prosperity will bring more business to the leading retail organizations, and firms such as Harrods and Marks & Spencer, with their own respective and distinctive clientèle, will benefit. Great Universal Stores will certainly derive the advantage of hire purchase derestriction. The queues outside motor-car dealers are a hint of things to come in the stock markets. Fords, British Motor Corporation, Standards and Rolls-Royce are promising starters for the 1959 stock exchange stakes. As for the boost in capital expenditure, it is almost bound to benefit a vast composite firm like English Electric with its interest in power plants, locomotives and most of the items on which this additional capital expenditure will fall.

LOMBARD LANE

* * *

wooden hut is ugly, and all of them look wrong in a village. This is why the market for old barns is so brisk.

The best were built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of oak and tiles, and they make excellent theatres. But most of them are still used as barns, and unless the farmer happens to want to play Hamlet (most do) your chances of finding one for sale are slim. If you do find one, you may be able to buy it, on site, for about a hundred pounds.

When you've found it and bought it, take the barn to pieces, transport them to the site of the theatre and put them together again. You'll probably have to find another barn—or perhaps a manor house of the same period—for the timber and tiles of the stage, the fly tower and the dressing-rooms, because you'll need the whole of the original barn for the auditorium. If it's an average one you'll have room for about a hundred and seventy seats.

How long it takes to build will depend (a) on raising from time to time enough money to keep you going and (b) your success in maintaining the *esprit de corps* of your labour force. This will be low in the summer because of holidays and in the winter because of the weather. But with an average strength of four on two evenings a week you should be able to build your theatre in about two years.

And when you choose a name for it, avoid "The Barn." There are dozens of them, and village audiences like to be sure that they're supporting the right company.

PHILIP HOLLAND

CRITICISM



BOOKING OFFICE

K. of K. and M. of A.

Kitchener. Philip Magnus. Murray, 30/-
The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Mont-
gomery. Collins, 35/-

AS Sir Philip Magnus's first-class biography shows, despite his best efforts to prevent it, Kitchener was a really horrible man. It won't do to attribute his ruthless ambition to his belief in the White Man's burden, or to a Christian crusading spirit, when it was fed constantly by intrigue, cruelty and rapacity. It is hard to see what Imperial end was served by breaking Curzon over "dual control" of the Army in India; and there was nothing Christian about the brutality which accompanied the building of the Sudan military railway, or of his treatment of the Emir Mahmoud, who was dragged in chains behind the cavalry and lashed by Sudanese guards when he stumbled, while Kitchener rode ahead on a white horse.

He was a remorseless looter, his minor trophies including the Mahdi's skull, and statues from the squares of Bloemfontein and Pretoria. His personal behaviour, though he could be charming to his "band of boys" or his influential friends, was often arrogant and coarse; "Get out of my way, you drunken swabs!" was his only greeting to the press correspondents before Omdurman; and when he was Commander-in-Chief in India he "was frequently seen driving [his phaeton] on the wrong side of the road, shouting at intervals to other carriages—'Get to Hell, damn you, out of my way!'"

His military reputation was won in operations against savages. In South Africa he began by totally disorganizing the transport system; later, when Roberts's illness pitchforked him into command at Paardeberg, he made an absurdly hasty plan and then galloped about "hustling troops into battle wherever and whenever he found them, without regard to orders which they might previously have received, and often without informing . . . the formations to which they belonged": and so lost the battle.

His contempt for staff-work, his

megalomaniac over-centralization and his chronic indecisiveness made his tenure of the War Office disastrous, and only his death in H.M.S. *Hampshire* saved him from dismissal.

In Egypt and the Sudan he was an enlightened and often kindly administrator; but it was not for this that the public took him to their hearts.

Now we have another military hero among us. Newly-ennobled in 1945, Lord Montgomery began to initial his letters "M. of A.," and it is hard to resist the feeling that he saw himself as a latter-day Kitchener; but there could hardly be two more outwardly different men. Montgomery was cruel only to his subordinate commanders; he was if anything sentimental in his relations with junior officers, other ranks and occupied peoples. He is ascetic where Kitchener was a voluptuary. In spite of a penchant for collecting autographs

and historic documents to which he had no right, he was the least acquisitive commander imaginable. He proved a brilliant and versatile commander at all levels, with a genius for organizing his staff and a capacity for decentralization that enabled him, for example, to go to bed half an hour before the opening of the battle of Alamein. After relinquishing command of B.A.O.R. he saw two "chairborne" appointments through to the end of their appointed terms.

Three-quarters of the Field-Marshal's book are of tremendous interest; to have a first-hand account of the campaigns written with such intimate knowledge and so little concern for the feelings of anyone else involved is of great value, especially as he does not hesitate to admit where he was wrong.

For example, he writes that at Arnhem "The airborne forces were dropped too far away from the bridge . . . I should have ordered . . . that at least one complete Parachute Brigade was dropped quite close to the bridge." But in 1945 he wrote in *Normandy to the Baltic*: "Available reports . . . was (sic) that the area was basically unsuitable for airborne dropping or landing zones. Moreover the flak defences at Arnhem and in the region of the Deelen airfield made it necessary to land some eight miles from Arnhem itself."

The stories of his conflicts over such matters as the broad- or narrow-front strategy in Normandy have already been ventilated by Eisenhower, Bradley and others, and Lord Montgomery adds nothing more than his own account: there are no changes of opinion here.

He is so keen to paint himself "warts and all" that he slyly over-emphasizes the warts, but at the same time makes it clear that warts are rather a gay thing to have. He freely admits his indiscipline on many occasions; he "seized" command of the Eighth Army two days before he should have, and at the War Office he led a conspiracy to unseat Lord Alexander of Hillsborough as Minister of Defence—not a bad idea at that. He allows little credit to anyone but himself for anything. He is quite frank about his liking for publicity.

It is this last quality that spoils the other quarter of the book. Like

NOVEL FACES—XLII



DAVID GARNETT

Garnett delights in quaint unorthodoxies—*Men in the Zoo, and Ladies into Foxes.*

Kitchener, Lord Montgomery is a very dull speaker; but unlike him, he is unaware of the fact. So page after page is taken up with verbatim reports of speeches, minutes and orders of the day (all copied out in pencil in his own handwriting?) of unbearable banality.

One quality the two heroes share—that strange adolescence that is so characteristic of most great soldiers and men of action. Both have a directness of view that prevents them from seeing arguments opposed to them; both used to form "gangs" of officers and intrigued endlessly to keep them together; both liked to collect things, though of rather differing quality; both were intolerant of insubordination but, when themselves subordinate, were insubordinate in the extreme; both were prone to say "shan't play" if thwarted in anything they wanted.

It is this boyishness, both in its good and its less good aspects, that forms the link between the two men; and it is this, I believe, that is at the back of the public acclaim for both. The British love a naughty boy—or did until the Teddies put naughty boys out of fashion.

B. A. YOUNG

Justice of the Heart. E. Arnot Robertson.
Collins, 15/-

Miss Arnot Robertson does not fit into any literary generation. She is an isolated writer, despite some resemblances to both the late Rose Macaulay and Miss Enid Bagnold, and apt to be overlooked when lists of leading novelists are being drawn up. Some flaw keeps her out of the top class. Her separate abilities remain separate, though they would make many better integrated novelists jealous.

As usual her new novel is very carefully planned and the difficult concept it investigates is attacked from cunningly varied levels. But what one remembers is the catty camaraderie of the heroine's colleagues among international feature-writers, the pictures of Zanzibar, the discussions of the transitional period in colonialism, the wit and the unexpectedness of the observation, and the sheer drive of the story. The merits of the novel are those it shares with journalism, though its aims are shared with poetry. The characters vary from unforgettable to mere scrawled ciphers. It is continuously enjoyable and ought to be a great success.

R. G. G. P.

Below the Tide. Penelope Tremayne.
Hutchinson, 16/-

The author of this book spent a year in Cyprus as a member of the Red Cross. She made use of her ability to speak Greek fluently to contact the bottom levels of the Cypriot society (by far the largest group), but it can hardly be said that she gives proportionate space to the views of the Turkish minority. The Turkish minority represent only 18 per cent of the Cypriot population and it is



"My wife doesn't understand me."

hard to accept the opinion expressed by Miss Tremayne that they do not stand in any fear of victimization under systems other than partition. As an account of the conditions in Cyprus as encountered by the author the book is undoubtedly excellent, and no one will argue with the conclusion that the majority of Cypriots are longing for an end to the violence. When that time comes the youths who think of EOKA only as something to admire because fighting for liberty is glorious might begin to wonder exactly what they were fighting to achieve.

A. V.

East is East. George Mikes. *Andre Deutsch, 10/6*

George Mikes, a Hungarian who settled here twenty years ago, is an enthusiast for the Empire who finds it sad that Britain should be losing it just as she has gained him. He travels with a quick eye for facts and a nice appreciation of absurdity, and few readers will not learn a good deal about the Far East (and, for no special reason, Turkey) from this short and witty account of his latest tour.

In India he was baffled by the gulf between the caste-system and democracy, and delighted to discover that prohibition in Bombay made British residents cling proudly to medical certificates declaring them chronic

alcoholics; in Tokyo he was driven by an ex-suicide pilot who deplored the dangers of his life as a taxi-driver. The irreverence with which he pokes his nose into the life of a foreign country is the mask of a highly intelligent observer. Nicolas Bentley's drawings make the book even easier to read. E. O. D. K.

Storm in the Village. "Miss Read."
Michael Joseph, 15/-

In pursuing the extraordinarily satisfying occupation of dividing human beings into the million and one classes into which they fall, you may find yourself placing the lovers of village life and their opposites, sheep and goats according to taste. Only the lovers should read this story; for the others it will indeed be a "little" book and "Miss Read," headmistress of Fairacre School, an out-of-date trifle—she even thinks *Winnie the Pooh* a bedside book to delight her guests! The lover of village life will not only devour her chronicle but will share in the horror of the Government's threat to build a housing estate and spoil the village's best view—according to precedent—and shudder at the folly of the young teacher who with Gilbertian abandon sought to push (throw is too gentle a word) her lot in with that of a very unpleasant gamekeeper. "Miss Read" has given us, faithfully and delectably, village life as it is to-day.

B. E. S.

Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge. H. C. Porter. *Cambridge University Press, 52/6*

The brisk contentions of academic life are constant, but miscalculation no longer leads to the stake or to the block. Five Tudor Chancellors of Cambridge perished on the scaffold. The effect of the Reformation on the Cambridge of Fisher, Cranmer, and Cheke is here described in terms both of theology and university politics; as the author puts it, in terms not only of St. Augustine but of *The Masters* by Sir Charles Snow.

Dr. Porter well evokes the rural setting of sixteenth-century Cambridge, which he compares to Hardy's Casterbridge. He reveals many vigorous personalities hard at work in their theological squirrels' cages. What a waste of ability it all was! There are cranks and fanatics and power addicts, but many Puritans were given to hospitality and kindness; many were born teachers with circles of pupils whose lives they changed. These

PRICE OF A SMILE

A FRENCHMAN, Duchenne de Boulogne, morbidly interested in the mechanics of mirth, ended a series of costly experiments by passing electricity into the main lifting-muscle of a friend's cheek and triumphantly getting a laugh—though on one side of the face only. You may prefer the simpler method of sending your friend PUNCH for a year: the only machinery involved is the posting of one of the order cards in this issue. At £2 16s., and a rough count of twenty smiles a week (both sides of the face, guaranteed) it works out at about a halfpenny a smile.

personalities come alive and explain what the Reformation meant in human terms. Here is a book of satisfying detail, if one would have liked to hear more of certain characters—of Dean Nowell, of St. Paul's, for example, a renowned angler who "inadvertently" invented bottled beer. In spite of a rather forbidding title, a book of deep human interest.

J. E. B.

AT THE OPERA

Boris Godounov (COVENT GARDEN)

THE grandeurs and miseries of the new *Godounov* put us on a complicated sort of rack. As it has come down to us from 1874 in alternative forms, the piece is at once a quarry and a shambles. Under Rafael Kubelik's conducting and Herbert Graf's producing it is sung at the Opera House in an edition that spatchcocks Moussorgsky's first two versions, avoids editor Rimsky-Korsakov's instrumental and harmonic titivations like poison, offers much "primitive" and angular part-writing, not to mention thinner-bodied scoring, and goes on for a long time.

The seventh and eighth scenes (out of ten) are the tepid Polish ones, abounding in saucy or sumptuous tunes (sung little better, at times, by the Princess Marina than by the Pretender Grigory) which have an oddly lowering and declassing effect on the proceedings as a whole. The interpolated scene (Act IV) outside St. Basil's Cathedral, Moscow, where the guilt-crushed Boris asks the Simpleton to pray for him, would mean more if the audience were able to follow the words, a thing they can't do since, out of deference to the *Godounov* (Boris Christoff), everybody sings every syllable in Russian.

Mr. Christoff did not get going with his Farewell and Death (one of Boris's two big scenes) until near 11 p.m., when many were beginning to fumble for cloakroom tickets. Both here and (more particularly) in the Hallucination Scene his acting was immense. He cannot blink or stir on the stage without being Boris. His rages were meteorological. His voice has neither the ultimate power nor (more importantly) the range of psychological colour that Chaliapin's had. So much is clear from recordings. But of its sort it is conspicuously smooth, serviceable and controlled.

Of the rest I remember best—and shall always remember—the traitorous Shuisky: tall and sable-trimmed, with off-magenta whiskers and spidery, mesmeric hands. This was John Lanigan. After several seasons as a conventional Australasian tenor Mr. Lanigan suddenly stood before us (I think of his *Basilio* in *Figaro* and his *Parson* in *Grimes*) as an actor-singer of unfathomed talent. Shuisky is a lead-sounding. It goes down deep and arrestingly.

In the grandeurs department Wakhevitch does capitally. His new sets are his old ones with the sillinesses (e.g. papier-mâché bells in the Coronation and the erratic monster pendulum in the Nursery) left out, and breath-taking ancillary splendours (e.g. a whole new cathedral for Kremlin Square) brought in.

I have seen it written that Mr. Kubelik took the music slow. Odd. What I noticed most was his damaging briskness—e.g., during the little orchestral prelude, at the onset of the monologue in the monk's cell, and near the opera's end, when the Jesuit duo are heard off-stage proclaiming the Pretender, an immense moment which on this occasion disappointed all who cherish it.

CHARLES REID

AT THE PLAY

The Stepmother (ST. MARTIN'S)
No Concern of Mine (WESTMINSTER)

ALTHOUGH by Warren Chetham-Strode, apt to discuss the ills of society, *The Stepmother* deals with a private, not a social, problem. Proverbially the stepmother starts on a sticky wicket; his (shared with R. C. Hutchinson, whose novel he has dramatized), one would say, faces the impossible (a) in succeeding a woman composed of iron and grit, who obliged her world to continue to circulate round her even

after she was paralysed from a hunting accident, (b) in marrying a senior civil servant of phenomenal inhibition, and (c) in being landed with a stepson who has been self-contained in misery since his semi-accidental shooting of a man for vile behaviour during the war. Both these oddities, united only in a nostalgic worship of her predecessor, are in an extreme form the human version of the ingrowing toenail.

Catherine is a warm, friendly person who likes affection. She is prepared for time to melt the frigidity of her stick of a husband, but she declines to leave his son to go further to pieces. Out of a warped sense of duty he is engaged to marry the tough Cockney widow of the man he shot (an improbable arrangement, at least as presented here). Catherine insists on nursing him through pneumonia, gratefully discovers he has fallen in love with her, and then launches him on a new life by telling him his only hope is to break free from the cloying influence of his dead mother. This shattering pep-talk, admirably conducted, is overheard by her husband, and it gives food for thought to this excessively stupid man, who one trembles to think might have even a minor say in the affairs of the Flywhisk Marketing Board. The curtain falls as he shyly suggests a second honeymoon in Switzerland. Meanwhile the floozy has withdrawn from an untenable position and wisely hitched herself up with her boss.



Catherine Ashland—KATE REID

[The Stepmother]

In the novel, which I have not read, all this may hold together and compel belief; in the play, otherwise almost a good one, it appears a little contrived, even if we accept, because of Catherine's niceness and vigour, that she would have married her administrative ice-box and taken such a keen interest in his ill-mannered son. But there is no doubt about the excellence of the acting. Kate Reid, from Canada for her first London

REP SELECTION

Gateway, Edinburgh (visiting Dundee Company), *Crime Passionel* (Sartre), until November 15th.
Castle, Farnham, *The Potting Shed*, until November 15th.
Northampton Rep, *Touch It Light*, until November 15th.
Marlowe, Canterbury, *The Farmer's Wife*, until November 15th.

production, finds exactly the quality of shrewd good-heartedness needed for Catherine. It is a very attractive performance. Tim Seely (the boy in *Tea and Sympathy*) seems again to be a specialist in tortured sincerity. Maggie Smith (who led in *Share My Lettuce*) is unfalteringly clever as the girl brought up the hard way who refuses to be dazzled by suburban grandeur, and Joan Newell gives a sketch of a twittering spinster which is truer than most. As the husband Ian Hunter has a fearful part and manages it with dignity. *The Stepmother* is well produced by Henry Kaplan, and tellingly decorated by Anthony Holland.

After beginning as a small-hours romp in a one-room basement flat, in which six young people try to share a bed and a sleeping-bag, *No Concern of Mine* slides into yet another play about a frustrated young man frothing with self-pity. Although laced with cheap jokes, the first part shows that Jeremy Kingston has a lively sense of comedy; in the second he is adrift demonstrating the tiresomeness of his characters without in the least engaging our sympathy. The moaning boy lives in self-chosen squalor with his sister, both drama students, and a roaring unsuccessful writer, who goes on the bottle at the smell of a cork but is surprisingly not the sister's lover. When the writer, having at last found a job on a wild weekly, taunts him that he is good at nothing (though fond of arson at school) he falls into a childish frenzy, goes out and steals five thousand cigarettes, and then unsuccessfully tries to gas himself. His main burden of complaint is that other people can find jobs. I longed to stand up and give him the address of the nearest Labour Exchange, where ten pounds a week was waiting for him. It is very baffling that we should reap this absurd dramatic crop of hopeless youths at a time of almost full employment, and of State spoon-feeding from the cradle. Or is it now assumed that juvenile delinquency must follow naturally on the intolerable restraints of a decent upbringing in a small provincial town?

This confused play, from which a better one may spring, is reasonably acted by John Fraser, as the boy, Judith Stott as his squabbling but protective sister, and Alan Dobie as the rough, self-centred writer.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)
Duel of Angels (Apollo—30/4/58), Giraudoux well translated and finely acted. *Five Finger Exercise* (Comedy—23/7/58), good straight play by new dramatist. *Valmouth* (Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith—8/10/58), Sandy Wilson's musical version of Ronald Firbank. ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

Me and the Colonel
Evidence in Concrete
Virgin Island

OF my two main reasons for dissatisfaction with *Me and the Colonel* (Director: Peter Glenville), one is sheer annoyance; for this marks another stage in the wasting of Danny Kaye. His unique and precious ability as a clown, with which once—how long ago it seems!—he was allowed to make us laugh ourselves almost literally helpless, is not used here at all. He plays a gentle, unassuming Jewish refugee who has a nice line in epigrammatic remarks and sly digs and bland amusing wisecracks with a basis of uncomfortable truth. One doesn't get, one isn't even meant to get, even so much as an involuntary laugh out of such things as this: their fullest reward is a wry smile or at most an appreciative chuckle. He plays the part very well, but—let's face it—all he has to do here could be done equally well by any one of a number of other competent straight actors. Whereas . . . how many others could do what he used to do years ago?

I'm not forgetting that the real belly-laugh can be produced by essentially naturalistic straight acting in an essentially credible story. It has been done again and again, even within the last year or so in such comedies as *Teacher's Pet*, *His Other Woman*, *Operation Mad Ball*. The point is that in those the laughs were produced by the skilled writing and the calculated timing of the effects by the director, not by one brilliantly funny performer. *Me and the Colonel* is just not that kind of story. It is a well-done, amusing duel of character between the Jewish refugee from Poland and the Polish colonel (Curt Jurgens) who does not like Jews. It traces their uneasy flight southwards across France in 1940, and—here we come to my other main objection to the picture—it is flawed even so, because so many of the scenes of stately backchat and antagonism between the two men are just that much too exaggerated, in a conventionally comic sense, to mix with scenes that remind us of the real misery and real fear of death in the other refugees all round them. Such exchanges as "After I've killed you I shall miss you very much"—"Me too" (during the ludicrous duel) simply do not belong in the same work as the glimpse



Colonel Prokoshny—CURT JURGENS

S. L. Jacobowsky—DANNY KAYE

of a road swarming with fugitives being machine-gunned from the air.

Certainly Danny Kaye shows himself to be a good, intelligent, perceptive actor. The more observant of us already knew he was; after the first few minutes everyone else must realize it, and from then on the adapted play has to get over on its own merits—which are not remarkable.

Simenon is the name that comes to mind in connection with *Le Dos au Mur*, or *Evidence in Concrete* (Director: Edouard Molinaro). The original novel was written by Frédéric Dard, who collaborated on the screenplay, but the story is very much of the Simenon kind, and the film is excellently done and most gripping.

It's a doom-laden affair about a jealous husband's elaborate plot to discredit his wife's lover, and involves blackmail, murder and the burying of a body in the concrete of a factory wall, but it is so crisply made, with such speed of cutting and such well-observed, often witty detail, that I found it neither gloomy nor unpleasant. Among the incidental scenes and characters too there is quite a bit that is amusing: notably a clever sketch of an ingratiating private detective. This is the director's first full-length feature film, and one to be proud of.

Virgin Island (Director: Pat Jackson) will give a lot of simple pleasure to a great many people, but it has its irritations. Oh, dear, another perishing "idyll," I thought when the theme was established, and so it proved: young American (John Cassavetes), English girl (Virginia Maskell), "whirlwind romance," cheerful do-it-yourself domesticity on their very own tiny island in the West Indies. She is a typical romantic-fiction heroine, gallant and gay and eager and "vivid" enough for six; he writes a book, and guess what? It's accepted! There is also some Ealing-style aren't-we-British-charmingly-comic business, and an out-of-key suspense climax involving a premature birth and an inaccessible doctor. It's all competently done and pleasant to look at, but most of it is for the moviegoer who just wants to watch nice friendly people having the sort of good time he wishes he could have himself.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Also in London: *Blitzkrieg*, the war "through German eyes," the commentary being a translation of what contemporary Germans heard with these newsreel pictures, mostly of the Russian fighting; interesting and saddening. *In Love and War* is a well-done American film of the not unfamiliar kind suggested by the title. The Swedish *Wild Strawberries* (5/11/58) is the most enjoyable and satisfying thing in London.

Best of the releases is a five-year-old



TOMMY COOPER

DAVID NIXON

reissue, *The Intruder* (28/10/53). Others include *The Barbarian and the Geisha* (29/10/58) and *Virgin Island* (see above).

RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

Abacadabra

THERE are people who are bored and even irritated by conjuring, illusions and the escapes of gentlemen with nothing up their sleeves from strait-jackets, blocks of ice or hermetically sealed coffins. Presumably such skills and marvels would fail to entertain them whether they were presented on a stage, among the cluttered tables of a night-club, or even in the hubbub of their own children's party. I am not one of these. I am neither sophisticated nor incurious. A man wearing a tail-coat crammed with doves, bird-cages and flags of all nations has only to come through the curtains and take an actual goldfish out of his ear and I am prepared to be agog for an hour, hoping against hope that I won't see through any of his tricks and stratagems. For this reason, when prestidigitation and hocus-pocus raised their fascinating heads on the TV screen I was delighted: but I must regretfully admit to having developed grave doubts about the David Nixon show, "It's Magic" (BBC).

David Nixon is immensely popular, not only in his capacity as a personality, and I will invite angry communications from many a well-ordered home by presuming to complain about any of his activities. Be that as it may, I suggest that "It's Magic" would cast a far more

powerful spell if it cut a lot of cackle and got down to business. For one thing, while it may be utterly beguiling to have stars of stage, screen, TV, gossip columns, Scotland Yard and I don't know where else coming along to choose a card or make officially sure that the cabinet is quite empty, their introduction usually involves a lot of pretty laborious back-chat or coy little professional jokes, and cuts down the magic by many precious minutes. It seems to me that if you're afraid your half-hour of solid magic is going to send the public to sleep you stand very little chance of keeping them awake by letting them see some Famous Personage sitting on a stool and clapping hands with glee. Either you have confidence in your magic or you turn the show into an "In Town To-night" and have done with it. For another thing, trick camera-work is rather second-rate illusionry. I have watched enough laughably weeny sprites coming up jerkily out of Mr. Nixon's ash-tray to last me a lifetime, and they can go on prancing about in front of his flabbergasted face from now till doomsday for all I care: I shall be in the next room practising my trick with the two corks. We've had all this technical jiggy-pokery before, in the cinema, and to tell the truth I don't believe it is even particularly convincing in this show. In any case, by my reckoning it isn't magic.

When Mr. Nixon *does* get down to presenting his visiting wizards we are always treated to some first-class work and splendid wonders are performed. Occasionally Mr. Nixon's own sleight-of-hand demonstrations tend to falter, but in view of the prevailing conditions of work I don't think he can be blamed for that.

On the other channel, Cooper's *Capers* (ATV) got off to a very wobbly start, and I can see no rosy future for it. Tommy Cooper's reputation rests on that hilarious and inspired cod-conjuring sketch with which he first burst splayfooted into the limelight, insanely laughing, hysterically bewildered, stamping and blundering heavily about among his flimsy paraphernalia with the tassel of his fez spinning like a crazy propeller to emphasize each double-take. It was a perfect piece of pantomime. Since then he has only rarely reached any notable heights of foolery, and his comic sketches in the first edition of "Cooper's *Capers*" were mostly rather dim. I can't help feeling that if he and David Nixon would get together in a magic show, the result might well be most acceptable.

Scottish Television Network's "This Wonderful World" on A-R has been one of the hits of recent months. Presented calmly by John Grierson, with no frills to cheapen it, this half-hour of extracts from films we can probably never hope to see at our local cinema is the most exciting programme at present available on the little screen. Long may it stay there.

HENRY TURTON

Essence of



Parliament

A FAR more interesting week than anybody could have expected. The Socialist tactics were clearly to debunk the Prime Minister. So last week we had had Mr. Bevan's Mr. MacWonder, and that was all followed up on Monday by Mr. Harold Wilson with his "turning Peter to the wall," and his gibe against the Prime Minister for imagining himself to be the heir both of Gladstone and of Disraeli. Mr. Wilson, whatever else may be thought of him, has a gift of phrase, and it was all amusing enough. The rest of the debate petered on—an excellent maiden from Weston-super-Mare from Mr. Webster, the exchange of some good-humoured Lancashire insults between Mr. Silverman and Mr. Fort—portentous dullness on Tuesday from Sir David Eccles and Mr. Robens, and a foregone division to wind it all up on Tuesday night.

Nobody had expected much more out of motor-cars at elections on Wednesday. The plain fact is that more people have voted since the restrictions were on than ever voted before. From that one might derive an argument in favour or an argument against the removal of the restrictions. The Government had so consistently flouted the wishes of its most vocal supporters in everything that really mattered that it was only decent that it should make some concession to the opinion of a Party Conference on a matter of no importance at all. The only irrefutable conclusion was that it did not matter very much one way or the other. This was clearly Mr. Butler's opinion in introducing the measure. But those who had counted on the matter going through easily had reckoned without Mr. Gordon Walker. Mr. Gordon Walker, leading for the Opposition, took advantage of the fact that this was an amending bill to argue

that he could talk not only about what was in the bill but about what ought to be in the bill—that is to say, for all intents and purposes about anything. So he took his chance to enumerate all the allegedly improper expenditure in which Conservatives indulged and to argue that a limit should be put on them. He complained of Lord Poole for confessing that he made use of the services of Dr. Hill's department. He complained of the Ministries of Housing and Health for allowing their stationery to be used for the distribution of party propaganda. He complained of the Prime Minister for allowing himself to be produced by Colman, Prentise and Varley.

Nobody would have guessed that if jokes were going to be the order of the day it would be Mr. Gordon Walker who would run away with the prize and leave Mr. Bevan and Mr. Harold Wilson standing. Yet that was how it was, and the applause which he received from his own side when he sat down showed clearly enough that he had made the speech of his life. He had, it is true, spoiled the debate for the back-benchers, for they, poor souls, had all come prepared to make their speeches about motor-cars, and now no one cared a pin about motor-cars one way or the other. Even Mr. Nabarro, for the first and doubtless the last time in his life, was visibly disconcerted, and everyone sat uneasily through the afternoon, waiting for the Attorney-General at the end of it, who alone had the opportunity of answering the charges, and wondering what sort of show he would make at answering them.

He did not make a very good show.

His simple answer was that the Prime Minister had agreed that an inquiry into the envelopes should be conducted by Sir Norman Brook, and with that answer there was nothing more to be said that could have caused at any rate any immediate excitement. But for some reason the Attorney-General, instead of starting by making this

announcement, rambled off into some highly confused generalizations about how Mr. Cube had a right to defend himself and about how the Prime Minister deserved his high reputation. They were irrelevancies, because the point was not whether Mr. Cube or the Prime Minister ought to have

defended themselves but whether their defence of themselves ought to be charged to election expenses. The result was that by the time that the Attorney-General made his announcement of the inquiry the House was giving a quite unnecessary demonstration of its powers to comport itself like a bear-garden.

At the same time, in the Lords, Lord Ammon was complaining that the B.B.C. was now giving out the starting prices. It will be interesting if they give them out for the election stakes. It may prove that Mr. Gordon Walker has struck a shrewd blow for his party.

Plenty of things are wickeder than for a Prime Minister to hire himself out to an advertising agency, asking them to sell him as if he were a soap, but very few things are funnier, and if the Socialists can only get people laughing at the Prime Minister their electoral prospects will be improved. But can they? If people cannot see that that is funny, they cannot see that anything is funny. There is no lack of jokes in modern politics. What is lacking is the people who can see them.

PERCY SOMERSET



Mr. Harold Wilson



Mr. Sydney Silverman

All This for 3s. 6d. on the Hill

By ERIC SPARKE

WITH the cricket Tests about to start again, involving, *inter alia*, the use of the Sydney Cricket Ground, it might be germane, apposite, etc., to record my last visit there as a Test Match spectator. I went to the most famous part of this ground—a grassy slope known as "The Hill" which is used by the proletariat (i.e. "The boys").

The moment I arrived outside the ground a tall, ferrety fellow sidled up to me. "Hereya mate," he whispered. "Sixteen bob change for a quid." I cut him dead and joined the queue for the ticket box.

Twenty minutes later I proffered a pound note to a crinkly-faced man, wearing a white shirt and a tennis-type sunshade.

"Three and six," he said, tapping the counter restlessly with his fingers. I pushed the pound note more conspicuously into the wire compound. He treated it like so much dirt and dross. "Can't ya read?" he asked, at the same time jabbing about two inches of worm-like finger through the wire mesh in a valiant attempt to point upwards. A big sign over the ticket box informed the public to bring the correct change. A cylindrical person behind me, who could read, stomached me out of the queue.

A voice whispered at my elbow, "Hereya mate, sixteen bob change for a quid." It was said sympathetically, helpfully. I came to terms. "Thereya," he said with only a flicker of a grin as he counted into my palm. "One single, seven marrieds, and a coupla zacs."

Half an hour later I entered the ground. A man dressed in a white dust-coat reaching to his ankles and wearing a peaked cap tried to sell me a book. "Here it is, sport. Here it is. All about the M.C.C." Then he waxed poetical: "The more you read, the more you learn; the more you buy, the more I earn." I brushed past. He seized my arm—"The dinkum oil," he insisted. I told him I had been a member of the M.C.C. since earliest childhood. He let me go.

I joined the throng heading for The Hill and found a place about half-way

up the grassy slope. There I settled down to wait. Within half an hour every inch of the slope was occupied. A vast crowd sat shoulder to shoulder like cups and saucers under a roasting sun.

Thousands came without hats. They knotted the four corners of handkerchiefs and spread them over their heads. Newspaper boys pushed through. The headlines read "Big Bank Robbery in City." The boys called out—"Buy yourself a sunshade. Sunshades, three-pence each."

I bought one and a kindly gentleman showed me how to make it into a tin-soldier hat. Some of the men took off their shirts and sat in their singlets like so many actors in *God's Little Acre*. The women pulled their dresses up over their knees. At the bar at the bottom of the grandstand an enormous thirst kept a chain gang of incredible length waiting in the sun.

Suddenly a roar went up, a roar of jubilant ferocity, which sent me leaping into the air with fright. I damaged my paper hat. The Hill had spoken. The game was on.

Settling back, I raised the glasses

and studied Miller's straining face as he hurled a new ball at the wicket. Then I obtained an eye-filling close-up of the nape of someone's neck. I lowered the glasses to find that late-comers were arriving in a steady flow and were standing in a single row on the path at the foot of The Hill just inside the fence.

This, I thought, was a bit thick—like the neck I had seen at close quarters. My comrades on the slopes thought so too. A shout of anger arose from those whose view was obscured. "Siddown in front," they yelled. The standers did not flinch. The most aggressive of them turned around and yelled back, but the others presented indifferent backs.

The yells increased. "Siddown!" "Why don't ya come early?" "That joker in the blue suit—siddown or get knocked down." Peter May was rapped on the pads. A man with a red face turned round and addressed the seated horde. "Shuddup, you great galahs. I'm gonna see the match. I paid me dough. Stand up like I have to." A plaintive voice made itself heard.



"Staying submerged all that time was O.K., honey—it was nice being some place we weren't unwanted."

"Please, sir, you would assist us all if you would sit down. If you co-operate, we can all see." The red-faced man looked astonished, taken aback. Then he thought of a reply. "No need to flaming well crawl to me," he said. That did it. The Hill was in an uproar.

May punched away a ball for four. A man leaped to his feet and punched Red-face on the jaw. The twelfth men emerged on the field carrying drinks for the players. Two men in shirt-sleeves carried Red-face to the cricket ground establishment of the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Three standers gone for a single blow.

The other standers, however, were not deterred—regarding the incident as a personal affair. They were apparently unaware that the world had divided itself into sitters and standers. They were soon to be informed.

"Let 'em have it," someone called from the slope and debris began to fly. The single row of standers suddenly wilted under a barrage of orange peel, half-eaten apples, bags of sandwich crusts, bottle tops, screwed-up paper, and empty ice-cream buckets.

A proportion of the standers sat down immediately, some with orange juice and butter on the backs of their shirts. The bombardment of the others increased until it resembled a snowstorm, but the standers soon showed their mettle. They declared war, rallied their ranks, and began recklessly pelting garbage back into the crowd.

Difficult as it was, I restrained the impetuous desire to join in the fray. In spite of my innocence I was struck in quick succession by two sandwiches—egg, I believe—and a knot of silver paper. After that I regarded the standers with an animosity quite out of keeping with my general feelings towards my fellow-men.

A middle-aged stander, he of "the blue suit," tried mediation. He spread out his arms in a helpless gesture and addressed the sitters in this wise. "Listen, you mugs. I can't see if I sit down. I cannot-see! I only want to see." Cowdrey hit three. A loaded paper bag hit the middle-aged gentleman, knocking his head on one side. He sat down, regardless.

With the luncheon adjournment order was restored. People surged to their feet and struggled to the water fountains and the bar, at the same time munching those sandwiches and cakes which had not been used for ammunition. Little boys weaved in and out of the crowd, picking up bottles.

When play resumed, however, the situation was completely out of hand. So many people had arrived that the single row of pre-luncheon standers had become four rows. The pelting was resumed. Hard words were said. Miller bowled Evans a bumper. Evans ducked his head. A youth in shorts and shirt did not duck and caught a piece of saveley on the ear.

But the standers could not be

intimidated now. The first row of sitters became standers. This meant the second row had to stand. The rot had set in. I was half-way up The Hill but the position was alarming. More sitters became standers. The contagion spread till I sadly surveyed the valiant sitters of a few hours before—striking their colours, and deflecting to the enemy. The standers were now ten rows deep and only the back row was being struck by the refuse.

At last my view of the ground disappeared and I was reluctantly forced to change my loyalties and rise to my feet. I could see the players now all right, but I was vulnerable. Evans was bowled and a split second later a bag full of broken biscuits struck me in the neck. Alas for the trappings of civilization. How weakly they bind us in the hour of trial. Something snapped within me. Even so, it was with an air of aggrieved dignity that I hurled the bag back into that pernicious herd of sitters.

Alas also for dignity. It disappeared in sudden fright as a big man rose slowly from the crowd and advanced toward me with biscuit crumbs clinging to the stubble on his face. He told me politely to get to hell out of the ground. I decided to take his advice.

There is really nothing like the radio. I must compliment the Australian Broadcasting Commission on the excellent ball-to-ball description it gives of a Test Match.



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